The

No. 324 (New Series), Vol. 7. June 4, 1938

TWOPENCE

PASSING SHOW

Beginning POSTMAN'S KNOCK *by* DALE COLLINS

I needn't cut down smoking

Phew! Three hard sets—all long ones too! Thank goodness I changed to Cooltipt or I'd have "cracked" for sure. . . . Bless those little wool tips! Even with Wimbledon in the offing I can still smoke my usual "exteen-per-diem"—since, with precisely 50% of the nicotine and oils filtered away, they only half count. . . .

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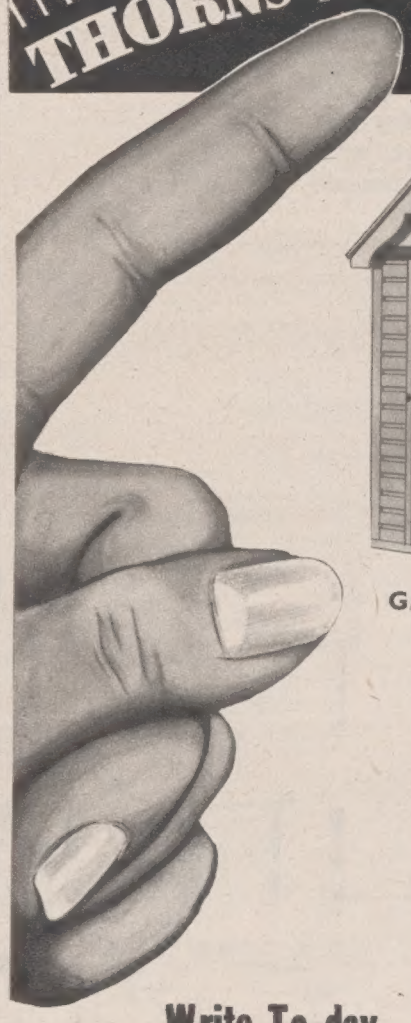

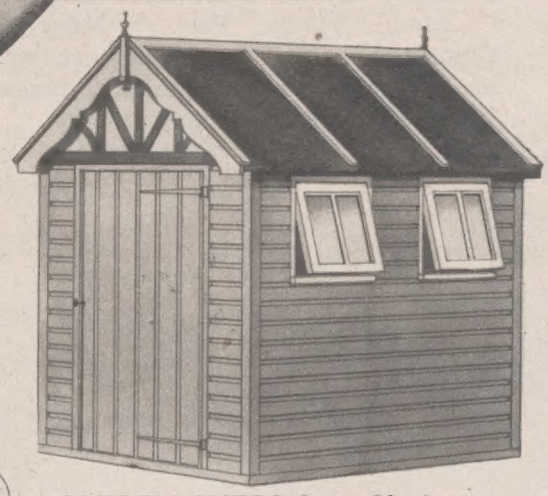

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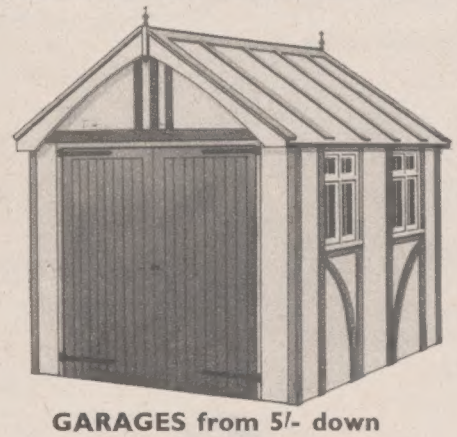

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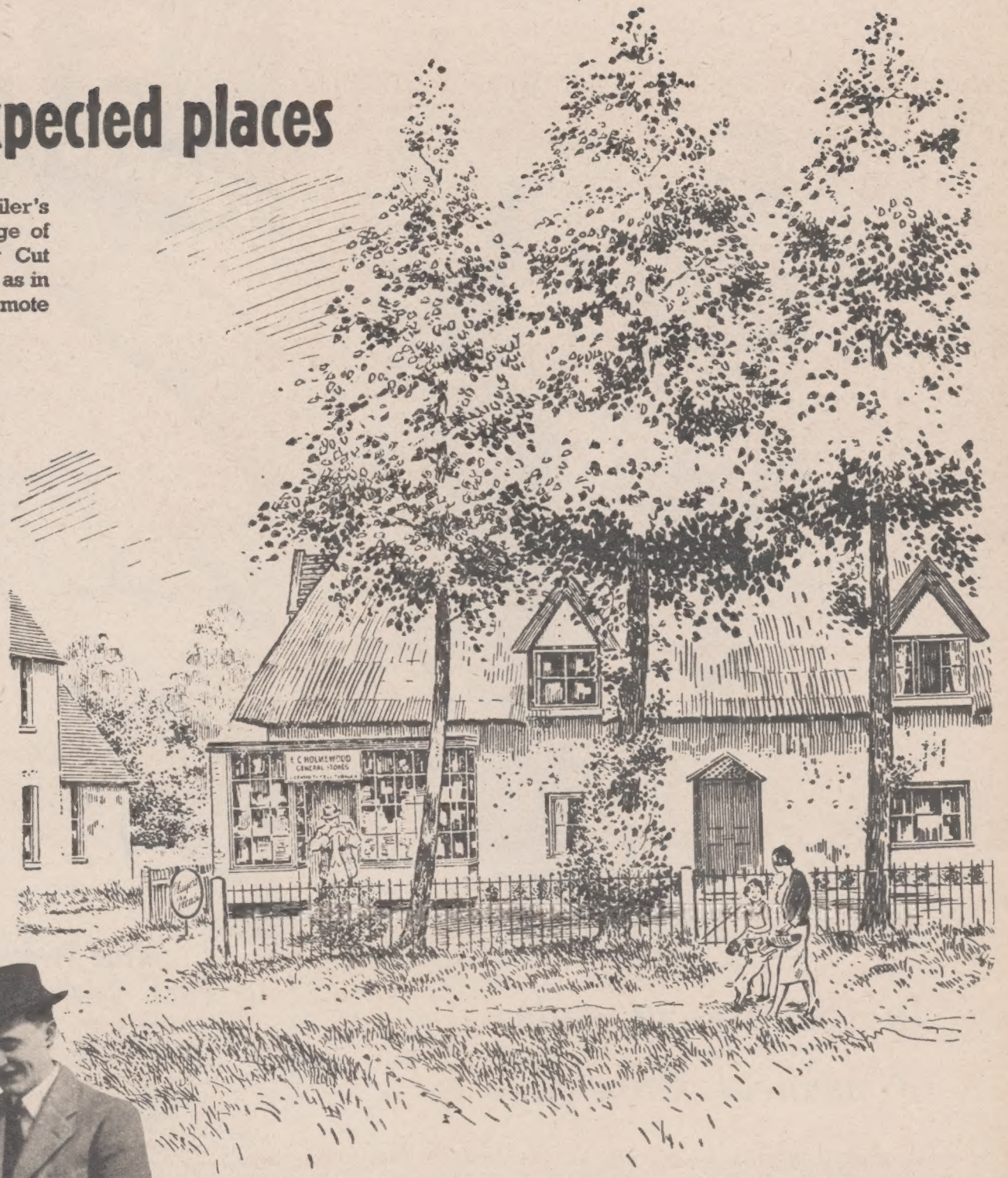

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PASSING SHOW
No. 324 Vol.7 JUNE 4, 1938

POSTMAN'S KNOCK

BEGINNING the story of the postman who went home instead. . . Those undelivered letters held a strange new lure for Old Joe but what of the people who sat at home anxiously waiting for his knock to ease their troubles and fears

BY
DALE
COLLINS

ILLUSTRATED BY
M. McKINLEY

THE rain drove down, cascading from the polished peak of his cap, seeping into his leaky shoes. Old Joe suffered from fallen arches and twinges of rheumatism. Before him the road stretched in depressing vista. The brightness of the windows in the big houses on either side, with their suggestions of snug homes and warm fire-sides, only served to emphasise the length and desolateness of the road to a temporary postman Old Joe sucked in his wet wisp of grizzled moustache and shivered. Perhaps he was due for a touch of 'flu into the bargain.

"Oh, curse them all," Old Joe thought, "they can wait for their letters until the morning. The sun may be shining then, and much difference twelve hours'll make. If I got my death, much they'd care. And the way my feet ache! Tomorrow'll be time enough and to spare. All this junk! What does it matter? I'll take what's left home and no one'll ever be the wiser."

The decision made him feel better. In his dark mood it seemed to him that he'd struck a blow for the underdog. He'd show them all—those comfortable people waiting for their slave to trudge along, and rat-a-tat-tat! bring the world to their doors for them. Let them wait.

He turned about and, walking quite briskly now, left the road to the cold wind and the rain.

His furnished room when he got back to it had never seemed more welcome, or more welcoming. The familiar drab place had a new warmth and comfort, for it was a sanctuary he had won by a brave show of spirit. He dumped the canvas bag, stained black by moisture, and grunted satisfaction. He might have been still plodding through the night and, instead, long ahead of time, he was home, and chilly people walking the street would see the glow of his window and envy him. Some of them might not have the sense to get in out of the rain; some of them might not have homes to go to—but he, Old Joe, had both the sense and the home.

Taking off cap, cape and shoes with twice his usual satisfaction, he put a match to the fire and settled down in a chair to warm and dry his feet. Steam rose from his socks. He wriggled his toes in relief. A sneeze only served to confirm his wisdom.

"Much thanks you get," he said to the plaster nigger-boy, who ate a slice of scarlet melon on the mantelshelf.

Presently he put on a pair of worn but comfortable slippers, and ate the cold meat and pickles Mrs. McGuire had set out for him before she went off to the pictures. She always left her lodger's supper against his return. He chuckled. Mrs. McGuire would never know how much earlier than usual his return had been. No one would ever know. He was, as they said nowadays, sitting pretty.

His mood of satisfaction and elation persisted when he had put the tray outside the door to be collected later, and was sitting over the fire with his pipe. There was still some stout in the bottle, and he poured himself a glass, not only as a precaution against a chill, but also in celebration. A good bake

(*please turn over*)

now, an early night, and to-morrow would be time enough for toil. He felt meditative and philosophical.

"Fancy all those letters!" he said to the nigger boy. "You'd wonder what people find to write about, and where they get the energy. No one ever writes to me, nor I don't to anyone neither, if it comes to that. Yet here I am delivering all those letters. That's a rum go, come to think of it. You push 'em in the box, and there you are. You never know what's in 'em and, good news or bad, never a word from the people that get them. Still, I should worry, I suppose."

He tried to turn his thoughts to other things, and picked up a paper. But the news failed to interest him. It was as though in refusing to perform his duty he had become more a postman than ever. The bag in the corner attracted and held his eye. All those letters! They shouldn't have been there in his room; they should have been in their new homes long ago. Why, by this time most of them would have ceased to be letters, having become charred ashes in fireplaces and crumpled balls and torn fragments in wastepaper baskets. In a way he'd done them a good turn, prolonging their brief lives.

People must go to a lot of trouble writing letters. And when the folk at the other end got them had the trouble been worth while? A letter might take an hour to write and two minutes to read.

He nibbled thoughtfully at his moustache.

Queer the way the undelivered mail drew him like a magnet.

He threw the paper down and padded across to the bag. Letters, eh? To him they'd been only things to get rid of as soon as possible, but now they were like guests under his own roof; they became real for the first time.

With no conscious order from his mind, his hand picked the top packet from the bag. The first letter was for Mrs. Carter. He knew her to be young and plump and with a baby and a baby car. It was addressed in girlish writing. An old school-friend, perhaps? Another young wife? Well, whoever wanted to chat with Mrs. Carter would have to put it off until he was ready.

The letter beneath was for next door. Another damp paved path to tread, another knocker to rap, another gate to close. He didn't know John Mathieson, Esq. It was a thick letter—a twopenny-ha'penny—and again in a girlish hand. There was a queer lump in one corner, and whatever made the lump was wearing through the envelope. People were careless the way they sent their stuff through the post. It would serve them right if half of it went astray.

Absent-mindedly he fumbled at the hard knob, thinking of letters in general rather than this particular one in his fingers.

Bristol, that comfortable merchant of a town, basked in sunshine after the week of rain. Mrs. Massey had the wireless turned on and hummed cheerfully in unison with it, as she bustled about clearing the lunch things. A breath of the sea was in the air, and it was good to have blue skies again.

"If it's like this in London," she said to her daughter, "John will be thinking of you and envying us down here."

"Yes," Pamela said briefly.

Mrs. Massey gave her a sharp glance and hoped she wasn't sickening for something. For a couple of days she'd been far from her normal gay self, dull and listless and unhappy. There were lines beneath her eyes almost as if she'd been crying in the night. Modern daughters would not be fussed over, however, and Mrs. Massey did not ask the questions on the tip of her tongue.

"Oh, mother!" modern daughters protested if you were too solicitous.

Pamela sat in the window seat, her hair golden in the sunlight, her blue eyes, usually so full of laughter, gazing out blankly at the garden which was, in Mrs. Massey's opinion, a sight to gladden anyone that day. But Pamela did not seem to see it. Had there been only a brick wall out there she could not have shown less appreciation.

The telephone rang. Instead of running to it, for practically all the calls were for her, Pamela said: "You answer it, mother!"

Mrs. Massey did so, her inner concern the more aroused.

"It's Jim."

"I don't want to speak to him. Tell him I'm not in. Tell him I'm dead. Anything you like, but get rid of him."

Mrs. Massey lied obediently, but with little skill.

She wore a puzzled expression when she returned, and her good resolution weakened.

"Whatever's the matter, Pam?" she asked.

"Nothing."

"But after John—a long way after, of course—I always thought Jim was your best friend. You don't generally put him off like that. In fact, you hang on to the 'phone as if it was—as if it was a lifeline. Have you had a quarrel with him?"

"No," said Pamela. "I haven't. I don't quarrel with my men friends. Or not with Jim, anyway."

"Then?"

"Oh, don't you see, mother? I just couldn't be bothered talking to him. Not this afternoon. I've got the pip, the blue devils. I didn't want to have to pretend to be his little ray of sunshine."

Experience warned Mrs. Massey it would be discreet not to persist. If one has reared a beautiful only daughter and spoilt her a little in the process because she is so lovely that everyone adores her, a certain amount of tact becomes a habit. Mrs. Massey, however, certain that something was gravely amiss, had to pursue the subject against her better judgment.

"I believe the fact of the matter is that now John's coming the day after to-morrow you're beginning to think you've been seeing too much of Jim and the others."

"Oh, mother!" said Pamela, inevitably.

"I've a good mind to tell on you. Engaged to the nicest young man in the world, and filling in the time while he's away with this one and that." Mrs. Massey saw the danger signals. "Silly, don't look like a thundercloud," she hurried on, "you know perfectly well I was only teasing. Of course you've got to have friends as well as John. Why, what could you do with yourself, shut up here with your father and me, while he's in London? I'm sure he'd be the first to approve and that you tell him all about them."

"Oh, mother!" said Pamela again, and started up impatiently. But the hurt look in her mother's face caused her to check her temper. "Sorry to fly off the handle," she apologised, "but I've an awful headache, and I don't want to talk about John or any of the rest of them. I think I'll go for a long walk. There's no sense in moping about here."

"That's a good idea," said Mrs. Massey. "But put on your coat. Though the sun's out the air's still fresh. And there's sure to be a letter this evening, if that's fretting you. Even if there's not I don't think you should mind. With John coming to us for his holiday so soon it's natural for him to keep his news to tell you himself. Besides, he must be very busy. You go——"

But Pamela had gone.

Mrs. Massey heard the front door slam, and sighed. Girls these days were something of a problem. Her wise smile came back. Perhaps they always had been. Perhaps her own mother had thought the same of her often enough. And she hadn't been as pretty and popular as Pamela. Her smile made her look quite young again. Perhaps, if it came to that, she had been. She thought fondly of her Pamela. Soon enough now she wouldn't be with them but far away in London. How she would miss even these rare moods of the child's! She envied John his luck in getting Pamela for keeps, and was glad that he was John. Soon he'd be with them, and the house would be full of gladness. It was a strain on young lovers to be parted. No wonder Pamela was sometimes a little on edge.

The telephone rang some hours later and Pamela announced that she was feeling better for the exercise, but would not be home to dinner as she would go on to see a film.

Mrs. Massey explained this to Pamela's father,

suppressing any tiresome details. No purpose in worrying him and spoiling their evening. It would be for the best if he went to bed before she came in. Mr. Massey, though the dearest of husbands and parents, was apt to be a little unperceptive and blundering. When he lit his pipe after the meal and settled down to the crossword she hoped it would prove easy. He was stubborn about his crossword, and did not like to be beaten by it. In the way of such things that night it proved more baffling than usual. Mrs. Massey did her best to help, but that was not enough.

Her father was still up when Pamela returned, but so engrossed that he did not notice the girl's unhappiness which her casual air could not hide.

"Had a grand walk, and saw a beastly programme," she said. "I think I'll turn in."

"Do, Pam."

"'A good run for runners,'" Mr. Massey pondered. "It might be 'Marathon' easily enough, but it can't be with only six letters and starting with a C."

"No, it can't be very well," said Mrs. Massey gravely.

"'Cresta,' goose," said Pamela as she gave him his good-night kiss.

"Smart girl!" said Mr. Massey, delighted, and his daughter was off whilst he was still filling in the squares.

"That leaves only this little chap. Ah, I have it. 'Bun.' All out, mother. I was determined it wouldn't beat me. What about bed?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Massey. "You go on up, dear. I've just got to put out the jug and lock the front door. Oh, and I think I'll drop a line to Aunt Kate for you to post in the morning."

"All day to write letters in, and you leave it till now," grumbled Mr. Massey, amused at the ways of womenfolk, but he tapped out his

"John? But why should you be upset about him? He'll be here in no time and that's why he hasn't written. It's the most natural thing in the world, the day after to-morrow he'll be——"

pipe and left her, which was what she wanted.

Aunt Kate was not going to hear from her that night. She had read a misery in Pamela's eyes that overcame her principles. This was no ordinary mood to be allowed to pass over. Pamela's blues were April showers. But not this time.

Mrs. Massey went quietly upstairs and paused outside her daughter's door. The town and house were quiet now. She listened. Mrs. Massey knew enough about the girls of to-day to realise that sobbing in their bedrooms was not a characteristic trait. Such softness belonged to her day, or even to her mother's. They might be rather hard, they might be pampered, these lassies of 1938, but they were not cry-babies without cause.

She tapped and went in.

Pamela lay weeping into her pillow.

"Oh, mother!"

"You're not going to 'Oh, mother!' me out of here, my dear," said Mrs. Massey, firmly, as she sat on the edge of the bed. "You can fly off the handle, as you'd say, but I've never seen you so upset before. It isn't good to bottle woes up. What's the trouble, Pam?"

Her daughter hesitated, torn between the desire for a confidant and her self-respect as a very adult person. Mrs. Massey waited quietly.

"It's—it's John!"

"John? But why should you be upset about him? He'll be here in no time, and that's why he hasn't written. It's the most natural thing in the world, as I told you this morning. The day after to-morrow he'll be——"

"But that's just it—he won't be!"

"What do you mean, Pam? Why, you haven't even heard from him."

"No, but he's heard from me. Oh, mother, what a fool I've been!"

Mrs. Massey took her little daughter into her arms.

"Hush, and tell me."

"It was crazy of me, mad," Pamela said. "When I knew he was coming back I began to wonder whether I really wanted to marry him and settle down. I'd been having such a good time with Jim and all the rest. They all liked me so and were so sweet to me. And I liked them, too. It didn't seem fair to John. I thought that if I could be interested at all in other men before we were married, I'd never make him a good wife anyway. It wasn't even as if he was just an ordinary man."

"There you are," said Mrs. Massey. "Doesn't that prove you're in love with him? Not just an ordinary man! It's the way we all feel when we're really in love. Though it seems odd to you, it's the way I felt about your father when we first met, and it's the way I feel about him to-night. So you've nothing to worry over."

"Oh, haven't I? You've not heard it all yet. I got more and more perplexed. I couldn't face John. I didn't want him to come down here and perhaps fall more in love with me than ever when I wasn't really in love with him."

"But——"

"Yes, I know! I know now when it's too late. I thought and thought and thought, and it seemed to me the only possible thing to do was to write and tell him not to come and breaking off our engagement. So I sent him back the ring the night before last. And now I see I only did it because I love him so. All the other men in Bristol aren't worth his little finger." She sobbed against Mrs. Massey.

"Silly one, there's nothing to fret about. All you've to do is wire him your letter was a mistake and he's to come. Together you'll soon straighten matters out. Why, I thought it was serious."

"And it is. Everything's spoilt. I wrote a silly letter saying all kinds of beastly things I didn't mean so that he wouldn't ever want to see me again. Even if I grovelled to him on bended knees, and he forgave me, the shadow of those wretched things would hang over us always. He'd never be able to believe completely again. I'd never be exactly the Pam he fell in love with."

Old Joe fingered the envelope addressed to John Mathieson. Careless was the word. Such a letter might go astray quite easily. His fingers proved how easily. He sat there in his furnished room with a three-stone diamond ring in his hand. It glittered dazzlingly, bewitchingly, and he stared hypnotised at it.

His first emotion was alarm. What he had done had been unintentional and unpremeditated. The fact remained that he had tampered with and opened a postal article entrusted to his care for delivery.

A valuable postal article.

A man would walk many miles of wet streets to make the worth of this sparkling thing he held in his hand. And yet it was just not too valuable. Indeed, very like the engagement ring of his dead wife which he had had to pawn to keep himself alive through even leaner days than these.

He put the ring on the tip of his little finger and gloated on it. It signalled bright promises of new boots and many other things; it lit a future beyond the day when his temporary job ended.

Half an hour ago he had had no thought of being a thief. He was merely a man whose tired feet had been so cold and wet they would walk no further. Simply because of that the letters had come home with him, only pausing on their journey. Yet who would ever know what had happened to one letter among the millions?

Without glancing at them he put the sheets of paper and the envelope on the fire.

"You poor angel," said John. "I would have been quite worried about you not writing, only I thought it was just because as we'd be together so soon you'd decided to save up your news. And here I find you were worrying yourself to death because you'd lost our ring. Little silly! Can't I get you another?"

Pamela clung to him.

"John Mathieson," she said, "if you buy me another ring you'll get it straight back again and I'll never, never marry you. I've been an idiot and I'll pay for it in my own way. There's only one thing I want—that's you. And I want you more than anything else in the whole wide world."

Which seemed to John Mathieson ample compensation for the loss of quite an ordinary little diamond ring.

Next

BLACK-MAIL

Week

WHO THOUGHT OF IT FIRST?

BY OSCAR MILLARD

I WAS lunching with a Frenchman. He had finished the peas and was now using his fork with that gusto and *joie de vivre* that the Latins alone can bring to the business of eating.

Suddenly he stopped, the *joie de vivre* faded from his eyes and he clapped the serviette to his mouth. *"Nom de Dieu!"* he said. *"Nom de Dieu!"* He eyed the prongs of the fork savagely and muttered bitterly: *"Mon ami*, your cutlery is as bad as your cooking. Regard this fork—sharp as a bistouri. Regard my lip! *Nom de Dieu!"*

Mistiming the swift, upward sweep of the fork with the swift opening of his mouth, he had stabbed himself. I commiserated and called for a blunt fork.

There, I reflected, is a man having reached a ripe middle age without learning how to use a fork so as not to do himself an injury. Yet he manages peas on a sharp knife with a dexterity verging on virtuosity. Now I came to think of it, that wasn't the first time I had seen a Latin stab himself with a table fork.

Could it be, I wondered, that foreigners had only lately been introduced to this refinement? It seemed improbable. But one of the major vices of this age, not far removed from Victorian smugness, is taking things for granted. Whether it be forks or flying boats that cross the Atlantic in half a day, we take it all as a matter of course. I decided to cease taking forks for granted.

On reaching home I took down volume Extr to Gamb of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and turned up fork. I learned that it is "an implement formed of two or more prongs at the end of a shaft or handle, the most familiar type of which is the table-fork, for use in eating," that in the human body it is "that part where the legs branch off from the trunk," and that "the *furca*, two pieces of wood fastened together in the form of the letter A, was used by the Romans as an instrument of punishment."

All very interesting, but not helpful in satisfying my thirst to know who had invented the fork and when.

Inquisitive by profession and nosey by nature, I could not let the matter rest there. And after long, relentless research I made the disconcerting discovery that less than two hundred and fifty years ago the table-fork was quite unknown in England, though already in use in Italy and France.

The Greeks had no word for it and the Romans knew it only on a large and dangerous scale as something on which to impale gladiators. The Chinese used chop sticks, and for many centuries, the rest of the world used their fingers.

Not until some time in the fifteenth century did anyone think of the fork as an adjunct to eating. No one knows the name of this benefactor, but one may conjecture that necessity was the mother of the invention. Possibly he had got himself half strangled, or manacled, with his spaghetti. For there is no doubt that he was an Italian.

A century before any other nation, high-born Italians were using forks and at the end of the sixteenth century they were a novelty at the French court. And so loath are we to imitate anything Continental that, were it not for one, Thomas Coryate, the Victorians might still have been feeling their way through their whiskers with their fingers.

Thomas was one of the breed to which the Empire owes the fact that it never sees the sun set. He spent five months on a tour of France, Switzerland, Italy, and the less wild parts of Germany in 1608. Some years later he wrote an account of his travels under the title of "Crudities," and this is what he says on page 90 of that entertaining volume:—

"J observed a custome in all those Italian cities and townes through the which j passed, that is not used in any other country that j saw in my travels, neither do j think that any other nation of Christendome doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian, and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, do alwaies at their meales use a little forke when they cut their meat.

"Whatsoever he be that sitting in the company of any others at meale, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meate with his fingers from which all at table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the lawes of good manners, insomuch that for his error he shall be at least brow beaten if not reprehended in wordes.

"This form of feeding j understand is generally used in all places of Italy; their forkes being made for the most part of yron or steele, and some of silver, but those are used only by gentlemen. The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any meanes indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike cleane."

The Englishman of that time considered this to be faddiness. For when years later Thomas "thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meate," he was "quipped for that frequent using of my forke by a certain learned gentleman, one Mr. Laurence Whitaker, who in his merry humour doubted not to call me at table *furcifer*, only for using a forke at feeding, but for no other cause."

In tracing the origin of ye olde forke through several musty tomes, I stumbled on a number of surprising things. Take butter, for example.

If you have read your Bible, you may remember seeing frequent references to butter, whence you naturally conclude that the Ancients knew it. But if you look again you will find cause to doubt that what they called butter was what we call butter.

For you will notice that they talk of "the rivers, the floods, the brooks of butter," and Job, bemoaning himself, refers to the time when "I washed my steps with butter." One also gathers that it was used for washing the feet and that drunk to excess it made people tight.

As I have yet to eat the butter able to cause me the mildest exhilaration, I share the opinion of those authorities who believe that what the translators called "boutyron," or butter, was mare's milk which, connoisseurs say, is an intoxicating drink. I'll take their word for it.

The first man to describe butter-making in detail was Hippocrates, the father of Harley Street. But he and his successors for many centuries used it for everything except spreading on bread. He prescribed it as a medicine for external use, and Spartan women used it as brilliantine and face cream. According to Plutarch, a Spartan lady paid a visit to Berenice and "the one smelled so much of sweet ointment and the other of butter that neither could endure the other." Do you wonder?

Galen, the Greek physician, practising about A.D. 150, prescribes butter burnt in a lamp until it is soot, for inflammation of the eyes. "Butter may be very properly employed for ointments," he adds, "and in cold countries, which do not produce oil, it is used in the baths." The principal use the Romans found for it was "anointing the bodies of children to make them pliable."

Whether this resilience was sought that the young might the better yield to the paternal slipper is not explained.

It was not until the late Middle Ages that butter came to be used for food, and up to the beginning of this century in Spain it was sold only in chemists' shops by the gramme. In fact, three years ago, in

many parts of Spain butter and its uses were still unknown outside the big towns.

Considering the comparative youthfulness of comestible butter, you will, perhaps, be as surprised as I was to learn that margarine, which I thought few had ever heard of until just before the war, was invented and sold in Paris well over a century ago.

Chevreul, a French chemist, published, in 1823 a formula for artificial butter, which he called margarine, from the Latin "Margarita" a pearl, on account of the pearly lustre of the fat. Chevreul's butter substitute was a very different proposition from modern margarine. It was made from the boiled nether regions of sheep.

Things undergo vast changes in the course of years, but the original name still clings. Consider, for example, iced drinks and ices. Given a hundred guesses as to who first thought of icing his drinks, I wonder how many of you would say Solomon. He did it by putting a handful of snow in the drink. He had the snow brought down from the mountain tops, buried in deep trenches, and covered with straw to keep it from melting.

It may console those who clamour in vain for ice-water in restaurants or groan about tepid beer in wayside inns to know that England was not the last country in the world to hear of refrigerators. Until quite recently Solomon's method of preserving snow was in use in Portugal.

In the matter of cooling drinks, the Greeks and Romans were centuries ahead of most licensed victuallers in England to-day. For they all knew and practised the trick of refrigerating by evaporation in the sun. But with iced drinks, as with so many pleasant B.C. customs, there was a time-lag lasting many centuries.

The hoary Middle Ages knew nothing of creature comforts, and when, in the early sixteenth century, someone rediscovered Solomon's system of snow cooling, it was loudly condemned as "voluptuous."

Actually this 'bell, book, and candle' act gave considerable impetus to the iced drink trade. For during the next two centuries in France it was only necessary to qualify a thing as voluptuous to give it favour with the high-born, however unpleasant or uncomfortable it might be.

Thus French farmers did such a flourishing trade in ice and snow carted from the mountains, that the royal treasury decided to muscle in, making the sale of snow a state monopoly—with the usual result. Farmers at once ceased to trade in snow. But the nobility, who now would not drink their liqueurs unless iced, were saved by the invention of artificial ice.

The discovery of saltpetre as a freezing agent is claimed by one Blasius Villafranca, a Spaniard, who "practised physic" on the Romans in the year 1550. From him the Italians learned how to make hokey-pokey. Introduced into France in the early seventeenth century and being condemned as a vice, it became an instant success at the court of France.

With their gift for adding frills and a touch of fantasy, the French nobles were soon adorning their tables with coloured ice fruits and toasting their ladies in iced liqueurs served in glasses carved from ice.

Parisian enthusiasm over ice was unfortunate for us. For, with our native distrust of Continental frivolities, we eschewed ice in any form for a long time, though both Bacon and Boyle described how to make it with freezing salt. But, as with coal gas, the production of artificial ice was considered merely as an interesting laboratory experiment.

Not until the early nineteenth century did we wake to its possibilities for packing fish and delaying the decomposition of other perishable goods. And even then we didn't make it. It was shipped all the way from Wenham Lake, near Boston, Mass., U.S.A., and retailed in England at tuppence a pound.

Hokey-pokey, for many years the only edible ice sold in England and shunned by the best people, followed years later with Italian organ-grinders. It will seem hardly credible to the young of to-day that ice cream is a post-war innovation in this country.

The trouble with this game of Who Thought of It First? is that in the words of the prophet Ramsay, it leads you on and on and on and up and up and up. Thus ice led me to the discovery that long before its value as a food preservative was appreciated, a method of food preservation was known based on exactly the same principal as canning.

Ancient Orientals dipped fish, fowl, and fruit in wax, and by thus keeping it airtight were able to preserve it for long periods, and this primitive method of canning is still in use in the Near East. When I was in Turkey early this year I saw people eating what looked like locust beans. I found that these "beans" were actually wax pods of caviare.

It would seem that in the old days we were an unimaginative race, for I had to seek long and far to find something an Englishman thought of first. It was wallpaper.

Charles I delivered a patent, on May 1, 1634, to "Our trusty and well-beloved subject and servant, Jerome Lanyard, who hath informed us that he, by his endeavours, hath found out an art and mystery by affixing of wool, silk, cotton, leather, and other substances with oil, size and other cements, to make them useful and serviceable for hangings and other occasions, which he calleth Londrindiana."

With a name like that it is scarcely surprising that wallpaper enjoyed but scant popularity, so that when a few years later French refugees introduced printed paper-hangings, they were regarded as a novelty, and the French got away with their claim to the invention.

It is extraordinary how people can overlook the obvious for centuries. You would have thought that the invention of a chimney to carry away smoke from the hearth would not have been beyond the wit of peoples whose civilisation in many respects was superior to our own.

Yet neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever thought of using chimneys, though the Romans had a system of central heating with hot air circulated through pipes in the walls that was a 100 per cent. more efficient than our prehistoric open fires.

When they had friends in to supper and cooked an extra large joint requiring an extra big fire, they had to warn the fire brigade lest the volume of smoke issuing from the kitchen window should alarm the neighbourhood. Take this passage from Seneca's "Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium," which I will translate for the benefit of readers who, like myself, no longer have any Latin:

"Last evening I had some friends with me, and on that account a stronger smoke was raised; not, however, such a smoke as bursts forth from the kitchens of the great, and which alarms the watchmen, but such a one as signifies that guests are arrived."

As far as anyone knows, the merchants of Venice were the first to think of improving on the hole in the roof by building flues in the fourteenth century, and it was probably through them that chimneys began sprouting in England.

All this somehow led me to insurance, which was not, as I imagined, first conceived in a smoky coffee-house in the city of London, but in Barcelona in the early fourteen hundreds. According to M'Cullock's very learned Dictionary of Commerce, insurance was introduced into England about the beginning of the sixteenth century, by whom no one knows.

Fire insurance soon followed maritime insurance, but it was a long time before it was thought fit and proper to "speculate upon the duration of the human life." It was in 1706 that the Amicable, the first life insurance company, received a charter from Queen Anne on the application of Sir Thomas Allen.

Apparently people weren't so dumb in Queen Anne's reign as is generally supposed, for within a few years of the establishment of the Amicable, companies were formed to insure for marriages, births, christenings and employment.

This form of insurance became such a racket that it was made illegal under penalty of five hundred pounds, and soon after even life insurance was forbidden in France "as being of a gambling nature and opening the door to a variety of abuses and frauds." The French peasant was obliged to fall back on his *bas de laine*.

And talking of stockings, I can't tell you who first thought of knitting them, though it is believed they came to England from Spain in the fifteen hundreds; but I can dispel the popular illusion that the wearing of silk stockings by the masses dates from the invention of artificial silk.

The first stockings knitted in England were made of wool, but they were soon replaced by silk. In the early sixteen hundreds the historian, Howell, noted with some indignation: "Silk is now grown nigh as common as wool, and become the cloathing of those in the kitchen as well as the court; we wear it not onely on our backs, but of late years on our legs and feet, and tread on that which formerly was of the same value as gold itself"

Gad, sir! What's the world coming to!

FINANCIER PLAYS THE LOVE MARKET

The nine-fifteen reveals another of its very human secrets in this entertaining story

BY WILL SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY JACK M. FAULKS

Julian never saw us. I don't think he saw the train at the babbling brook. He was somewhere in Never-Never-Land, hand in hand with his cook

NOBODY now on the train can remember the day when Julian Overdyce first began to travel on the nine-fifteen. It was long ago, years ago, long before the war, when he was a young man and just beginning. He's turned sixty now and pretty near finishing, by the look of things lately. For years he's been known on the train as the Oldest Inhabitant.

Julian Overdyce has never been very popular on the train, or off, I should think. He hasn't a likeable personality and his way to success hasn't exactly made him dear to anybody. He's lived all his life for money and he never cared much how he made it. Still, when the time comes the train won't be quite the same without him, somehow.

It's an odd little story. Like most stories that get along the train and crop up again and again, it doesn't really concern us in the least. We never spoke to any of the people concerned except Julian himself and not really to Julian, after he got to the top hat and Corona stage. We weren't so much onlookers as listeners-in and even then we'd never have heard much, if old Sloman hadn't had luck with a penny pool and given his wife a birthday present of a real maid, complete with cap and apron.

To put it another way, it was rather like watching a play from the wings. Unless, of course, it was more like hearing about the play at the stage door.

Julian Overdyce's beginnings weren't known to many people. There's scarcely any doubt that he began his career in finance by stealing a pocket-book on the train. This is over thirty years ago, now, and forgotten. It was before old Sloman's day, but a man who was on the train at the time (a fellow named Smiley; long since dead) told him all about it, and he told me, not so very long ago. Old Sloman isn't a gossip. Nor am I, I hope. We didn't spread the story.

It was never proved, you see, but there wasn't much doubt.

Julian Overdyce in those days was a shabby young man of about thirty. He always wore the same suit, which grew shabbier and shabbier as the seasons passed. He was so broke that he couldn't even afford a newspaper to pass the time on the journey, and he used to sit in a corner, morning after morning, and watch the scenery go by. He was never much of a mixer and as the men didn't exactly take to him from the beginning, he was rather left on his own. Which seemed to suit him, though.

On wet days he never had an umbrella and only on the coldest days did he wear an overcoat, because the only overcoat he had was too threadbare to be seen. Smiley told old Sloman that Overdyce was quite a familiar figure plodding through the rain to the station. There was a tuppenny horse bus in those days, but Julian never had the tuppence.

The name of the man whose pocket-book it was, I never heard, but Smiley's story was that he was sitting next to Julian that morning in 1907 (or whenever it was) and he took it out to refer to a visiting card or something and everybody could see there were a number of fivers folded up inside. The man on the other side had less money after the loss than before and he went bankrupt a few weeks later, so it never looked as if it could have been *him*.

Anyway, at Cannon Street the pocket-book was missing. They were actually in the station, and it was too late for more than a rough search. Everybody pretended to look everywhere, of course, but the pocket-book never turned up again, nor did the fifty pounds which was in it.

Well, things stayed like that for about a week, and then one morning Julian Overdyce turned up in a new suit, with a new overcoat and an umbrella. The fellows on the train raised their eyebrows and looked at each other, but, after all, what could they do?

To have accused Julian without definite evidence, might have led to very serious trouble and there wasn't a scrap of definite evidence to be had. The victim did try to discover where Julian had bought his new clothes, hoping to find out if they'd been paid for with a fiver or two, but he never *did* find out. He hadn't the nerve to ask Julian point-blank for the tailor's address. He'd kept no record of the numbers of the notes and he said, therefore, there wasn't much sense in going to the police. So nothing came of it.

The point was that the pocket-book had been taken by somebody in the compartment and the other fellows were more or less above suspicion. Still, that was as far as the matter ever went. Or as much as old Sloman got to know.

The next time the wet weather came, Julian began to ride on the tuppenny horse bus.

As I've said, he was never popular. He was less so now, although, of course, nobody quite felt like telling him why.

Well, many a man has started on less than fifty pounds and made a fortune, so that if he'd had the fifty pounds, you might say Julian had a good start. It's absolutely certain that he started at that time. His business was any business that offered ten per cent without work, and just then it began to flourish in a small way.

Julian Overdyce had always lived in old Sloman's town, so that Sloman was able to find out a bit more about him than the rest of us.

He was living, in 1907, in one room in a back street. By the end of that year, he had moved into a small flat in a better district. He was never one, even later in life, for throwing the money about if it needn't be thrown. Twopence on the tuppenny bus didn't please J. O. for long. He bought a bicycle and went to the station on that, leaving it in the back yard of a shop close by, for threepence a week.

A few years later he was missing from the nine-

Being the facts, hitherto known only to the fellows of the nine-fifteen, of how Julian Overdyce, Esquire, was so busy rolling his eyes at love that he nearly forgot the habits of a lifetime

fifteen for a long time. He used to go up on the earliest train in the morning and work all the hours that heaven sent; and when he turned up again, months afterwards, he had two or three suits and a big ring. He was already beginning to be showy.

In 1912 he was married and about this time he was heard of in connection with a number of companies in the city. They weren't very reputable companies, mind, but they were companies that everybody'd heard about.

Oh, and his bicycle had gone by now and a second-hand car had taken its place. He used to drive himself to the station in this second-hand car every morning and leave it in the yard of the Station Hotel for as little as the proprietor would take each week. Also, he moved into a rather nice little house called the Old Rectory, which hadn't been a rectory for years and years.

Julian was supposed to marry "above him" for business reasons. Anyway, it seems pretty certain that up to that time he'd never known, as they say, "what love is." His wife was, by some years, the elder and, so I've heard, nothing to look at. She was beginning to feel that the tide would go out and leave her. Julian was no bargain, socially, or in any other way. But any port in a storm; so they signed the agreement. A year later a daughter was born and she *was* something to look at. Otherwise, the rumour went, Julian would have put her out to a foster-mother right away.

Well, the war came and upset everything, although it didn't seem to upset Julian Overdyce very much. The man whose pocket-book it had been, went away and never came back. Old faces disappeared, new faces came, everything changed. Smiley survived until after the war, into Sloman's early days. Then he died, leaving the story of the pocket-book to Sloman, who passed it on, years later, to me.

J. O., in my first days on the train, was already Julian Overdyce, Esquire. He travelled first-class and never mixed with "the likes of us." He smoked expensive cigars and read financial papers and nothing else.

My town is a little farther down the line than his, so that I'm always on the train before and after him. I see him come and I see him go. Some mornings when he's late, or the train's early, I see him arrive in his car. Many evenings, when the train has a wait, I see him drive off to his home. From my personal point of view, Julian's story has been one of a tubby man growing tubbier and a succession of cars, each more expensive than the last. For some years he drove them himself. Then there was a chauffeur. Then there was a little girl beside the chauffeur. As the years have gone by the little girl has grown up. Sometimes she is there at the wheel, in place of the chauffeur, "seeing father in."

She's twenty-five or so, to-day and not as attractive as she used to be when she was little. I don't see how you could very well be Julian Overdyce's daughter and stay attractive for ever. I've never seen her except through the window of the train, when she's been there in the station yard at the wheel of the Rolls. But I must say she looks a most capable and efficient young woman. And I know she *is*.

Yes, it's a Rolls now. And for ten years past J. O. has worn a top-hat. And an overcoat with an astrakhan collar. And for all those ten years he's lived in the big, white house which he built for himself. You can see the towers of it peeping up over the trees just outside the town.

Five years ago Julian's wife died. He didn't, as the boys put it, "take a holiday." He was away for the day of the funeral only; then he was back with his big cigar behind his financial paper. Business as usual. If indeed it had been interrupted. Perhaps the funeral was just an incident in the business.

No, that's not a nice thing to say, I know; but you ought to meet J. O. The man's been an outsider from his cradle, putting Julian first in everything he ever did, or said. Though they do say his daughter can manage him; the first person that ever could. She's been keeping house for him since her mother died, and doing it more efficiently than any paid housekeeper, from what you hear. She's supposed to be rather proud of him in a way. After all, he *is* the great Julian Overdyce, Esquire, and *she* can't remember the shabby days when he wasn't.

Now, the train being what it is, with the same people on it year after year, naturally we're more or less of a *family*, and people like Archibald and the guard are more or less old retainers. If anybody's leaving us, or is up against it for a while, we pass the hat round, very much on the quiet in the second case. We make a presentation, or get up a subscription. And practically everybody on the train gives *something*. Even Julian Overdyce. A shilling, if he's in what he would call a good mood. If he's in a bad mood you get nothing.

Well, one morning, in the spring of this year, we heard that old Copley, the guard, who had been on the nine-fifteen most days for years and years, was retiring and going to live with his married sister somewhere in Dorset. And, of course, that meant a subscription at once, and this time it was my job to do the collecting. So I made out my list on a foolscap sheet and worked the train from one end to the other, getting about the best result for old Copley that we'd had for anybody, for years. Very popular old Copley had been, with a cheerful word for everybody each morning.

Anyway, I finished the thirds and came to the firsts and went in to see J. O. He was sitting alone as usual, because nobody would ever sit with the man unless they were crowded in on a full train.

I say he was sitting alone as usual, but it wasn't quite as usual, somehow. There was something *different* about Julian. I thought at first that he merely *looked* different, as we were all looking different that morning. I mean, there were green shoots on all the hedges and lambs in the fields and even old-timers on the train were getting ambitions again, ambitions that would die in a day or two as soon as they got used to the weather. It was spring and you knew it. And, of course, it *had* a bit to do with what had happened to Julian, though we didn't know that then.

However, it was more than a weather-change that I saw when I looked a second time.

Julian was wearing a button-hole!

Never before, since the first time I ever saw him on the train, had I known Julian Overdyce to wear a button-hole. You'd have said a garden was a place where he never went and a flower a thing he had never heard of. If it had been done you might have expected to find him wearing a pound-note pinned to his lapel. But never a *flower*. And it couldn't be the spring entirely, because there had been lots of springs and Julian had never noticed them.

Then I spotted another thing.

Julian was reading a magazine and his financial paper was unfolded on the seat at his side.

Aha! I thought; well, there's only one answer to that. And there was, as we found out.

Well, he looked up and waited for me to say something, and I said it and he seemed to be quite interested.

"Copley, the guard, leaving?" he said. "*Leaving?* But that will be a real *loss*. We've got so used to Copley. He's a good man. I like him."

"So we're getting up a subscription," said I.

"Subscription? Yes, the right thing to do," agreed Julian Overdyce.

"We thought," I explained, "a little gift and the balance in the form of a cheque."

"Yes, of course," said Julian. "Very acceptable. And what are they giving?"

I handed him my foolscap subscription-list and he put on his gold-rimmed glasses and looked at it.

We're not millionaires on the train and, in any case, it wasn't the idea to snow old Copley under with money, but just to let him know what we all thought of him. The biggest amount on the list was five shillings.

"I see," said J. O. "Well, here's a pound, if it's any use."

Any use! You could have knocked me down with the famous feather and taken your time counting ten. A pound! From Julian Overdyce!

I gave him his receipt and put his name down in the little space and hurried back to tell the boys. But not before J. O. had aired his opinion that it was a beautiful morning.

The boys were staggered.

"A pound?" said Tilly. "What's happened to him? What's it mean?"

"It means, I *think*," said I, "one touch of nature. Old Julian's gone human in his old age."

They wanted details.

"That's not all," said I. "he's reading a magazine and wearing a button-hole!"

"Wearing a button-hole?" Old Sloman gaped at me.

"Wearing . . . a . . . button-hole," said I. "Julian Overdyce."

"It's the spring!" said Long John.

"We had a spring last year, if you remember," said I, "but Julian never looked up to see it."

"It's a woman!" said Teddy Dybbs. "I know. It used to get me the same way."

"There was a woman, before, and he married her," said old Sloman, "but it never cost him anything for button-holes."

"It's *love*!" said Long John. "And that's the first time. He's dodged it till he's turned sixty, but it's caught him out at last. It's love."

And it *was*.

But we found out for an absolute fact in rather a roundabout way.

Old Sloman, as I told you, had some luck with a penny pool and with money to spare, for the first time in his life, he thought he might as well branch out a bit. The Slomans had never been exactly rolling in it, and there wasn't enough of life left for them to trouble about saving up for the future. So they made a bit of a splash. They got a lot of things they'd never had. One was a fourth-hand car. Another was a maid.

By a coincidence, this maid happened to be the cousin of one of the maids up at the big white house where Julian lived.

And this maid told her cousin and the cousin told Mrs. Sloman, who told Sloman, who told *us*.

"Find the woman, they say," said old Sloman. "Well, she's found. Who d'you think? You'd never guess. It's the cook."

"The *what*?" said Long John.

"The cook," said old Sloman.

"Well, I'm damned!" said Long John.

Julian Overdyce, Esquire, wealthy financier, with his baby castle and his Rolls-Royce, in love with the cook! It certainly took a bit of chewing.

"But when you think it out," old Sloman explained, "it's logical. He came from what are called 'the people,' although it may be an insult to the people to say so. He's past needing to make money and the top drawer doesn't cotton on to him—never did. It's natural that at his age one of his own class should attract him. About all he wants is company and somebody who can cook; and she can. What she *is* doesn't matter. He was born without an aitch to his name. But that's beside the point. It would be all the same if she were a princess. From all I hear he's got it badly. He's never loved a damn thing in all his life, not even his daughter. But it's happened to him at last. He *loves* the cook."

"And what does she say?" I asked.

And that's where the funny bit came in.

"She doesn't know," said old Sloman.

"Doesn't *know*?" all the boys said together.

"Well, you see," said old Sloman, "it's this way. The first time any of them saw him looking goo-goo-eyed at the cook was last Friday, and on Saturday she went away for a fortnight's holiday before he had time to say anything to her, it seems. He didn't know she'd gone away. His daughter, as housekeeper, sees to such things as holidays for the staff. But he was like a cat on hot bricks, Saturday and Sunday, when she wasn't about, and Monday he couldn't stand it any longer."

"So?" said Teddy Dybbs.

"So," old Sloman went on, "he found his way into the kitchen and *asked* what had become of the cook."

"Might as well put handbills out," said Tilly.

"Oh, he doesn't know anybody's noticed," said

(*please turn over*)

old Sloman. "And now he's found out she's on holiday somewhere he does nothing but moon about the place waiting for Saturday week, when she comes back."

Old Sloman threw his hat at the rack and pushed his fingers through his hair with a Well-I-ask-you sort of gesture.

"One of the maids," he said, "found a photograph of the cook in his bedroom, although he doesn't know that. They say he mopes about the garden all evening admiring the daffodils and reading novels under the weeping willow tree. It'll be poetry next. It's remarkable what it can do to a man, and a man, at that, who never cared for anything but money before, and wasn't particular how he got it."

"Funny," said Long John; "if he'd fallen in love thirty years ago instead of now I wonder how different his story would be to-day?"

"What's his daughter say about the new Juliet?" I asked.

"You don't think, do you," said old Sloman, "that anybody's got the courage to tell *her*? And as he's managed to keep out of her way whenever possible, since it happened, she hasn't found out yet. The funny thing is that neither the daughter *nor* the cook seems to have the slightest idea about it. If the daughter thinks he's a bit queer in some way, no doubt she just puts it down to his lumbago and the fact that he's gone sixty."

Well, of course there was nothing else talked about on the train for the next fortnight but Julian Overdyce's romance. It blotted out the international situation and everything else that appeared in the papers. It was the news, the whole news and nothing but the news, on the nine-fifteen.

We used to walk along the corridor each morning and peep through the window of his compartment to see what latest thing love had done to him. His button-holes grew bigger, but after a bit his novels ceased to be. And I don't mean his financial paper came back. It didn't. It was a case now of absolutely nothing. He just sat at the train window and stared into space for miles. And he didn't even see the space.

Since he was in a nice coming-on mood, a few of us roped him in for things that would have been impossible before love brought the cook into his life. We got him to join and pay subscriptions to clubs and what-not that he had never heard of in his life. He was vice-president of more things in that fortnight than he'd been in all the rest of his days put together.

He paid up like a lamb, and about all he ever said was that it was a nice morning this morning.

It was so easy that one of the fellows got him to be president of a society that didn't exist at the time and hasn't since, and there was quite a beano in town that night, on the proceeds of the president's first two guineas.

Well, one morning he wasn't on the train and what we said to each other was: "It's happened! Old Julian's through with waiting and he's wired the cook to come home and be the blushing bride at once."

And we were wrong.

We found out we were wrong in two or three minutes. In fact, as soon as we were clear of the town and rolling along through the fields again. It wasn't so springy this morning. There were wisps of mist tumbling about over the fields and the sun had stayed in. But these aren't details that a real Romeo notices. Certainly they meant nothing to old Overdyce.

Teddy Dybbs was looking out of the window. All at once he gave a whoop.

"Love's young dream!" he shouted, pointing.

And there we saw Julian, plus fours and yellow gloves, with a feather in the side of his hat, leaning over a gate and gaping at a babbling brook.

"Can't work for it now," said old Sloman. "Got to take the day off and contemplate nature. It beats the band!"

Julian never saw us. I don't think he saw the train as it went by at the top of the embankment over his head. I doubt if he saw the babbling brook. He was somewhere in the Never-Never Land, hand in hand with his cook.

"What he'll get for all this mooning about in the mists," said Long John, "is a damn fine double dose of 'flu."

And although Long John was only guessing, he was right, for that's just what Julian Overdyce, Esquire, *did* get.

The maid's cousin told the maid all about it and it came to us, as usual, through old Sloman.

Julian's daughter thought, at first, that her father had gone off his head, fooling about in the fields in a mist with a feather in his hat. But she took no chances and she managed him like she managed everything else in his house. She put him to bed, lit a fire and sent for the doctor.

And then the fun began.

Nobody ever found out if it was much of a dose of 'flu to start with. At any other time J. O. would probably have been up in a couple of days. But the doctor said four days in bed, and what the doctor said Julian's daughter underlined, and four days in bed it was. And J. O. pretty well *did* go off his head.

Because four days in bed carried him to Monday and the cook was coming back on the Saturday.

On the Saturday morning he was in open rebellion, but his daughter thought his health was getting worse. At lunch time he refused his food and wanted to know if the cook had come back. His daughter took this as a reflection on the cook's cooking, tasted the stuff herself, found it was all right and began to get anxious about her father.

By teatime all Julian could (or would) say was "I want the cook! Send cook to me!"

And of course his daughter *didn't* send cook to him. She didn't want a scene in the sick-room and complaints about cooking that was absolutely perfect.

So she sent an S.O.S. for the doctor and the doctor found that Julian's temperature was up quite a lot of points. He put it down to the 'flu, not knowing anything about the little romance, heard all about the old boy's unjust complaints about the cooking, said that something would have to be done, and gave J. O. something to send him to sleep and keep him asleep for a long time.

And then, suddenly (it was the Tuesday, I think,) pop went everything.

Julian Overdyce, Esquire, re-appeared on the train. And it *was* Julian Overdyce, Esquire. It wasn't Romeo, by any means.

I saw him get out of his car and bang the door. I saw him plough his way through the booking hall and on to the train. The door of my compartment was open. I smiled as he went past.

"Good morning, Mr. Overdyce," I said.

He glared at me fit to kill, stamped into a first and slammed the door.

"Something," said old Sloman, "has gone wrong."

"Something," said I, "has gone very wrong. Did you notice details?"

"No sonnets under his arm," said Tilly.

"Financial Gazette instead," said Teddy Dybbs.

"No buttonhole!" said Long John.

"Gone are the days!" said I.

"*But*," sighed old Sloman, "she can't have turned him *down*? Not a cook? Not Julian Overdyce, the richest man in the town, with a baby castle and a Rolls? She *can't* have turned him down. I'll have to ask the wife about this."

And he did.

And the next morning he told us. But he looked at me sort of straight in the eye when he told us, because, as I've explained, I knew a bit more about the good old days than some of them.

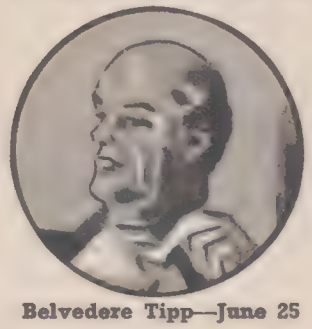
And the little bit he said about poetic justice was rather over their heads.

"He didn't propose to her when he got over the 'flu," said old Sloman, "because he couldn't. She wasn't there. His daughter had given her the gentle push. Fired her, in other words. For stealing. Found her, the maid's cousin tells us, on the Sunday night lifting a pocket-book. Lifting a pocket-book. She didn't send for the police, because the cook had been in the family for years. But she said: 'Go, and go this minute!' And cook went. And will stay went, you can take it from me.

"And such," old Sloman summed up, "is life."

Old Familiar Faces!

Here is something for your note-book—a list of forthcoming issues in which you will be able to renew acquaintance with some of your favourite fiction characters

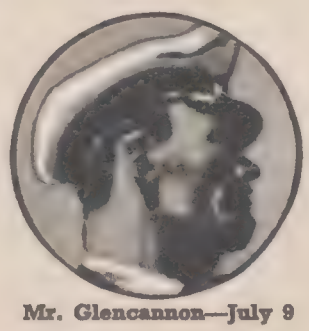


Belvedere Tipp—June 25

Hector—July 2nd

Longshanks—July 2

Edgar—July 9



Mr. Glencannon—July 9

Elizabeth—July 16

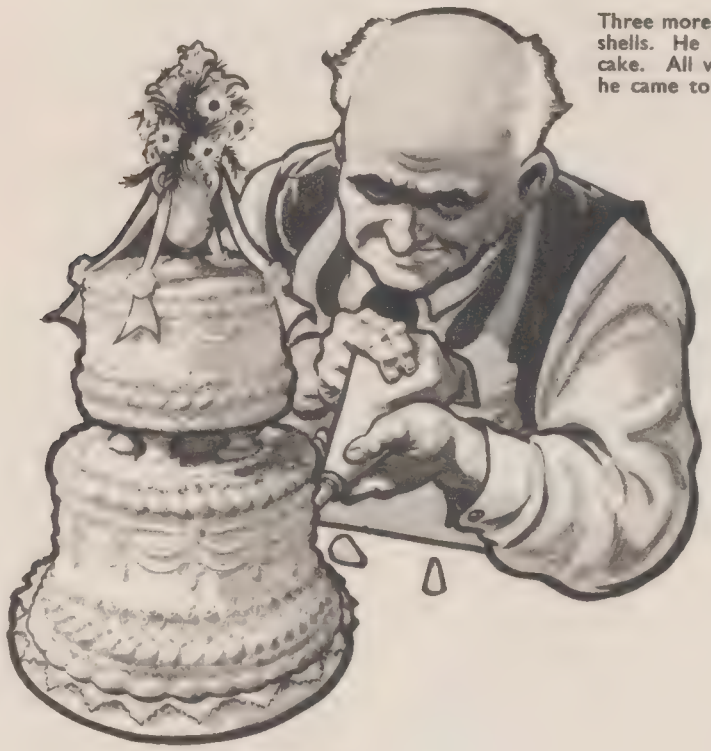
Meet them all in the "Passing Show!"

THE LAST ROSE

SHORT SHORT STORY
of a rose fashioned in drama

BY SANDFORD WILTON

ILLUSTRATED BY EDGAR SPENCELEY



Three more roses and two shells. He bent over the cake. All went well until he came to the last rose

"WE was wondering if Grandpa would make the wedding cake for us."

When the old man heard these magic words, he came out of his day-dream with a start and looked eagerly across the room at his daughter's visitor. Proud excitement trembled in his ancient voice:

"Wedding cake did you say, Mrs. Dowson?"

"That's it, Grandpa. My eldest is getting married next month, and we was wondering——"

But his daughter, Annie, shook her head and made mysterious signs.

Grandpa saw and understood. He said stubbornly:

"Cert'nly, ma'am, I'll do it for you."

"We-ell, if you can," Mrs. Dowson looked doubtfully at Annie, who remarked quietly:

"I really don't think you ought to attempt a big job like that, m'dear."

Grandpa knew what she was afraid of. His heart trouble. The next bad attack would probably be the last.

But—a wedding cake!

When he was in business, he'd always specialised in wedding cakes. His wedding cakes had been famous. And for years after he retired, his relations and his old customers had come to him when they wanted one.

But he hadn't been given an order now since Annie's boy got married, six years ago. And it would be grand to make just one more before he died. Just one more.

"I could take me time over it," he pleaded.

The great task was begun.

Slowly, unhurriedly. The lining of the cake tins with buttered papers. The preparing of the fruit. The scrupulous weighing of each and every ingredient. The careful mixing.

To ensure a perfect bake, he took mysterious and elaborate precautions of his own. This new-fangled gas oven of Annie's was supposed to be foolproof, but he had no faith in its knobs and gadgets.

All the time the two cakes were in the oven, he found it impossible to keep still. Annie persuaded him to lie down at first, but he was back again in the kitchen before long, gazing at the oven door with the anxious expression of a mother whose only child is undergoing a dangerous operation.

At eight o'clock the ordeal came to an end. The oven door was opened and the two cakes were pronounced well and truly baked.

When they were quite cold, Grandpa brushed them over with a little brandy, wrapped them in greaseproof paper, and put them away in a tin.

Ten days before the wedding he began the icing process. First of all, two coatings, smooth and even. And then the thing he had been looking forward to the whole time. The decorations.

Over these he lavished all his patience and skill.

They were exquisite, those roses and those shells. He spent hours on them, carefully experimenting with the icing until it was of just the right consistency. Not too thin, or else it would come spurting out of the nozzle of the piping-set; not too thick, or else the delicate curves would be spoiled.

As he worked, his old, wrinkled face was transfigured with a strange joy—the joy of craftsmanship. Something of his very soul went into the moulding of those flowers. They were emblematic of his entire life—of the gentle, painstaking, overconscientious man who had never spared himself; who had never been content with things half done, or done indifferently well.

Two days before the wedding, it happened—the thing that he had feared. He intended to complete the decorations that afternoon, but suddenly, without warning, a heart attack came on.

He was alone in the kitchen, and his first thought, as soon as he began to recover, was that Annie mustn't know. For she would call the doctor, and that would mean a week or more in bed. And Grandpa wasn't going to submit to that. Never in his life had he disappointed a customer, and to send out his last and best piece of work incomplete was unthinkable.

Somehow he managed to put the cake and the icing-set away and crawl to his own room. When Annie looked in at tea-time and found the place in darkness, Grandpa said: "It's only a touch of headache, m'dear. Think I'll go to bed early." And he kept his face in the shadow when she lit the gas, so her suspicions were not aroused.

All night, as he lay wakeful and ill, his mind was concentrated in one burning thought: he was going to finish his job.

On the following morning it was a great struggle to get up and make a show of eating his breakfast. He could feel Annie's watchful eye upon him. Presently she said:

"Are you all right this morning, Grandpa?"

"Right as rain, m'dear," he declared stoutly, helping himself to another slice of bread, most of which was subsequently smuggled from the table into his pocket.

It was a bitterly cold day. An east wind howled down the chimneys and found its way through every crack and crevice in the walls of the house.

Till one o'clock Grandpa sat very quiet in his own room, nursing his strength. Fortunately he never ate much dinner, so that when this meal was announced his poor appetite was not remarked.

"I'm going to the pictures with Mrs. Dowson this afternoon," Annie told him. "And she'll be coming here afterwards to have a bit of tea and collect the cake. It's all ready, isn't it?"

"Will be by the time you're back," he promised.

Alone at last, Grandpa got out the cake and the icing-set.

His head felt dizzy, and his legs were weak as he stood there at the table, but with lips tightly compressed he began his task. First of all, to make the icing.

It proved troublesome, half a dozen experiments failing to yield the right consistency. Tears of mortification blinded his eyes. Faint and pale, he collapsed into a chair.

Ten minutes later, however, the bowl on his knees, he was trying once more. Another failure. And very little icing sugar left. He emptied the bag. This time it *must* come right. It did.

He filled the paper cone, fitted the appropriate nozzle, and made a preliminary whorl on a sheet of paper. Then, with a silent prayer for strength, he stood up.

Three more roses and two shells. He bent over the cake.

All went well until he came to the last rose. Then the supply of icing ran out. And there was no more sugar.

Drat! Why must Annie go off like this, just when he wanted her? A terrible thought struck him. She wouldn't be home till seven o'clock, and the grocer's shut at half-past six. And the wedding was to-morrow morning. Of course, he knew what they'd say. It didn't matter—just one little rose. But it did matter. His professional pride was at stake.

Only one thing to do. He struggled into his overcoat.

The wind came down the street like a torrent of icy water. It swirled about his bony knees. It stifled his nose and mouth. It made him feel as though he had no clothes on.

He struggled forward somehow—faint and sick, gasping for breath, his heart thump-thump-thumping.

There were a dozen people in the shop. He waited doggedly. They served him long after his rightful turn. That had been happening all his life.

At length the precious packet was in his hand and he was on the homeward journey. The wind was at his back now, driving long pointed knives into his heart and lungs, piercing him through and through.

For more than five minutes he was fumbling blindly at the keyhole. He opened the door at last, closed it behind him and staggered a few steps down the passage.

And it was there that Annie and Mrs. Dowson found him two hours later, clutching the icing-sugar.

Grandpa seemed to rally a little shortly after midnight. He recognised Annie for the first time. And he remembered.

She bent close to the faintly moving lips.

"The—cake," he whispered.

She nodded vigorously. Smiled. "Mrs. Dowson was ever so pleased with it. Ever so pleased."

His eyes were blurred and troubled. "Not finished—the last rose——"

"As if anyone's going to notice that. Why, Grandpa, you've never made a better cake. It looks beautiful."

She didn't understand. He closed his eyes. His fingers plucked at the counterpane. His jaw moved rhythmically, keeping time with the maddening thought that was chasing round and round his brain:

"Not finished—not finished—not finished!"

He could *feel* that blank space where the last rose should have been. He could *feel* it.

He must finish the job first—finish the job.

And all at once he felt himself rising from the bed, walking out to the kitchen. The cake was standing there on the table, just as he'd left it. The sugar was there, too. He got to work, and the icing came exactly right first time. He bent over the cake, hand firm, eye clear and, with a gentle, even pressure he began to fashion the last rose. In a few moments it was complete, with never a false line in its subtle tracery.

Annie, watching at the bedside, saw a faint smile come slowly to the old man's lips.

"He died very peaceful," she told Mrs. Dowson, next day.

VILLAGE MURDERERS CAN BE SO SIMPLE

THE complaint Mrs. Previsb made to P.c. Jull meant nothing to him at the time, since the best of us can't help little accidents, and everybody knew that the Miltons had their troubles, while Mrs. Previsb was Village Nuisance No. 1, anyhow. Also, it happened two weeks before the most public of their troubles—Martin Bignor's jilting of their niece, Ruth Laider—became P.c. Jull's own worry, when Ruth unaccountably and completely disappeared.

She just walked out of their shop Wednesday night and was seen no more, and for three days the Miltons drove all other thoughts out of P.C. Jull's head by their insistence that some dirty work of Martin Bignor's was behind her vanishment. On Saturday afternoon his worries grew worse. Children playing in the old sandpit outside Boar's End stumbled on the silk-clad knee of a girl buried under a new fallen mound of sand. It was Ruth Laider. A small bullet wound in the base of the left breast and the entire absence of any kind of weapon left no doubt she had been murdered.

Not that Detective-Inspector Galt, who came, with young Low, from County Headquarters to handle the case, had any reason for worry. It was just a simple village crime to him.

"Straightforward as they're made," Galt said, in his downright way. "No sign of a struggle an' the gun was fired so close her coat was badly burnt; that tells you all you need, don't it?"

P.C. Jull looked as though it wasn't so plain to him, but young Low, no country bumpkin, said alertly:

"Someone she knew too well to be frightened of did it. A friend—or lover. They were so close they might have been kissing."

That hint of a Judas kiss increased Jull's worry. He'd been afraid it would point to Martin Bignor and he liked Martin.

"Yes, a lover," Galt nodded. "This sandpit is just the place for lonely meetings. That makes him a local chap, so does the way he got her to stand just here, so that when he killed her he had only to use that old shovel there to cut away the base of the cliff and bring the whole sand face down to bury her. Yes, he knew all the local possibilities."

"Funny then he didn't remember that kids always play here Saturdays an' she'd surely be found quick," P.C. Jull mumbled.

"That's quite a point," Low said quickly.

"Don't try to make a big headline mystery out o' this, young-feller-me-lad," Galt jeered. "Murderers, especially village murderers, always overlook fool things like that."

Young Low, just promoted to the plain-clothes branch and very up-and-coming, was stung by Galt's air of superior wisdom, particularly when the inspector drove it home by asking Jull:

"There *is* a local lover, of course?"

"Well, there is an' there isn't," Jull said, uncomfortably. "Young Martin Bignor, who lives behind here at 'Low Thatch,' did seem to 'ave a fancy for her one time, but that's over this month back, he's even engaged hisself to a young lady at Glynd."

"There you are." Galt threw a mocking glance at young Low. "An' a jilted lass can be a darn nuisance to a man in those circumstances, eh, Jull?"

"As to that, Martin ses no. I naturally questioned 'im since she disappeared. He ses Ruth didn't mind. All the trouble was made by the Miltons, an' they say——"

"I'll see the Miltons now," said Galt, who preferred to collect information direct.

Mrs. Milton had plenty to give. She was the wife of the village baker, and apologised for leaving the door between the shop and the parlour ajar because she hadn't an assistant now and her husband was on his round. Even that semi-publicity did not curb her violent opinion of Martin Bignor.

Mrs. Milton was a small, scraggy woman, of the hard and grasping village type. Her bitter envy of all those better off had been inflamed by the tragedy that had overwhelmed her. She was even resentful of her niece for having brought this shame on her.

All this came of having ideas above one's station, she said. Ruth was not a village girl. Her father, Mrs. Milton's brother, had had a good position in the Glynd Corporation tramways and had given Ruth a lady's education which had enabled her to take governess positions with good families, though she had had to give them up to nurse her father through his last illness. After his death she had come to live with her aunt, her only relative, while she looked for something fresh, but most of the looking had been at young Martin Bignor.

Mrs. Milton insisted that Martin had made a dead set at Ruth from the moment she came to Boar's End. They were about so much together that the whole village was talking of them, "An' then the young sweep goes an' chucks 'er for this real lady at Glynd."

"So, this Bignor's a gentleman is he?" Galt said.

"His father was the big man here," P.C. Jull said. "A builder; made a pile putting up that big estate between here an' Glynd. He's dead; so's Martin's real Ma. It's the second wife who lives at 'Low Thatch,' a foreign lady old John Bignor met on a tour in Sweden; a widder, with a son of her own, Otto, who lives there, too."

"An' a pretty pair," Mrs, Milton said viciously. "Caught old John on the 'op with her foreign ways. Anyhow, what's Martin, for all his education, but a builder's son? Ruth was every bit as good as 'im, an' you know it, Jull."

"Aye, she were a nice girl—pretty, too," Jull muttered. "But so's Martin a good chap. An' he sez that 'im an' her——"

"It was all that stuck-up foreign woman's doing," Mrs. Milton blazed, quickly. "She an' her wanting to mix with the gentry. Martin might ha' done the right thing by my girl, but Ruth was not good enough for *her*!"

"Bit of a local catch, eh?" Galt said, cynically, his shrewd eye having assessed her and her shop.

"As to that, Ruth had money of her own, £3,000 her poor Pa left her." The woman bridled. "It wasn't money she wanted."

"Then why this fuss about jilting?" Low demanded.

"There's such a thing as pride," the woman said, fiercely. "No decent girl could allow herself to be put upon like that."

"But Bignor told Jull she did not mind," Low persisted, only to whip the woman to fury.

"Oh, *he* says that—easy to say anything now the poor girl's dead an' can't give 'im the lie. Not that he didn't try to get round her, but me an' my husband had a word to say to that."

"So your husband took a hand in this?" Low snapped.

"An' so he should," the woman shrilled. "It wanted a man to take her part, an' he meant to see right done by Ruth, as he told Martin Bignor to his face. An' that's why this 'appened. That skunk saw he couldn't dodge his obligations so he killed her." Her voice screamed in the bitterness of her charge. "I don't care who 'ears it, I say he killed her."

Galt, who had been watching Low's blunderings with amusement, showed his underling how deftly the old hand could seize an opening.

"That brings us to the point, what evidence have you that Bignor met her in the sandpit?"

"Well, he's done it before," said Mrs. Milton, sullen and breathless after her outburst. "Everybody knows that. An' the sandpit being just behind his bungalow, its plain it was him."

"You mean she was seen with him there since this trouble began?" Galt insisted.

"It's village talk," the woman said, sourly. "Ask 'em at the 'Diggers Arms;' they often saw her going towards the sandpit. An' she was always slipping out sly like without telling."

"But why secret meetings?" Low put in.

"To get behind us," the woman spat. "He knew she was soft an' thought 'e could talk her round."

"How were these meetings arranged? Letter, telephone, message?" Galt asked.

"'Ow do I know. She was never the one to tell. He only had to pass word in the street. It might even have been 'im that phoned her just before she went out last Wednesday—an' never come back."

"Ah!" Galt looked triumphantly at Low. "We're getting at something now. Anything particular about that Wednesday message?"

"No, there wasn't," snapped the woman. "It come about seven-thirty, just as I was getting supper. Ruth answered; she generally did. She just said, 'It was for me, I got to go out after supper.' That's all she saw fit to tell *me*. Then after supper, about nine, out she went, an' never come back. An' if that wasn't Martin Bignor on the 'phone luring her to her death, who was it?"

"Plain as daylight," Galt said with satisfaction, as they left the baker's to call on Martin Bignor. "They put the screw on too hard and this young chap, desperate because of the other girl, lost his head, lured Ruth to where killing seemed safe, an' did her in. It's the old story."

"Looks like it," sighed P.C. Jull. "Only I'd never ha' thought it o' Martin. No, nor of Ruth neither."

"You never know what anyone'll do when they're cornered," Galt shrugged. "As for her, you've only got to look at that Vinegar Jane of an aunt to see they was forcing her on, an' the shop tells why. It could do with a packet of easy money, I lay."

"That's truth, anyhow," Jull nodded. "Ted Milton's in a larmentable bad way. Debts all round."

"What *I* don't like," young Low said, doggedly, "is all this obviousness. I mean that sandpit was a fool place to hide the body, as Jull says. Then there's the jilting an' the telephoning and all that—anybody but a fool would know it would all point to him."

"That's because you ain't learnt yet that there's none o' your subtle cleverness about village crimes—outside books," Galt jeered. "This is just a matter of a darn fool losing his head and trying to cover up what's he's done without much gumption. Tell us about this Bignor chap, Jull."

Jull hadn't much to tell. Martin Bignor was a likeable chap of twenty-four. He'd been college educated, but it hadn't made him a snob, for, like

All God's chillun got clues, when greed and hate conspire in the killing of a jilted village maid, but you can trust the city policeman to find the right answer, after it has been expertly worked out for him

BY DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CLIVE UPTTON

"Yes," Galt said. "Someone has; removing the blockage, too, and changed a toy into a killing weapon"

his father, he was very friendly with the villagers. Like his father, too, he had a taste for working with his hands. He was too well off to need a job, but, being crazy about engineering, he had a shed behind his bungalow fitted as a workshop. He wasn't much given to girls, but he had certainly been about with Ruth Laider, though he said——

"I'll hear that from himself," Galt rapped. "Tell us how well off he is—if you know?"

P.C. Jull did; it was an open secret in the village. Old John Bignor had been a warm member, worth £60,000 at least. Apart from an annuity to his second wife, Martin was to get it all when he was twenty-five.

"An' he's near that now," Low said quickly. "Meanwhile, I suppose they're all living on the interest, the wife and Otto, her own son, and all?"

That was about it, Jull said. It was known that old Bignor hadn't liked his second wife's ways; she was a bit too much a lady for his taste, and he wasn't going to have his cash wasted playing the gentry. But he'd been fair. He'd left the wife enough for her comfort and held off Martin's getting the bulk until he was twenty-five, so that she, and especially her son, Otto, who hadn't a job either, would have time to look round—or so the story went.

"Point is," Low said, keenly, "that when Martin succeeds they suffer."

"Better point is," Galt sneered, "was it likely? How does Martin get on with his stepmother an' brother?"

P.C. Jull thought they got on all right. But, of course, Martin wasn't her sort; she was such a lady, dignified and cold. It was probably true she'd been mixed up with the jilting of Ruth, she was very masterful, an' Martin was the easy-going kind who let her rule the roost. Martin didn't get on so well with Otto, who was the la-de-da sort and workshy.

They saw how true Jull's reading of Martin's character was when they reached the bungalow. He was of the big, easy-going kind, and, even though he was badly cut up about the business, he couldn't take his own part in it seriously. He said it was all rot about his jilting Ruth. They had fancied themselves in love at first, but it was Ruth herself who saw there was nothing in it. They'd talked it over in the frank modern way, and Ruth had remained his best friend. Why, she'd even known all about the Glynd girl weeks before the Miltons started making trouble.

They alone were responsible for this talk of jilting. They'd tried to bully Ruth into sueing him for breach of promise, but she wouldn't have it; so Ted Milton had taken the matter into his own hands, had even had the "neck" to come round and try to browbeat him and his stepmother—trying to blackmail him for a lump sum down. But he had never really worried. Ruth herself had assured him it was only a try on, and she'd never consent to take the case to court.

"We've only your word for that, seeing she's dead, "Galt said, harshly. "Got letters from her to prove it?"

"Letters? No, there was no need to write when we could meet any day to talk things over, as we did," Martin said.

"In the sandpit?" Galt sneered.

"Of course. It's just behind this house and it was safe from the Miltons' spying."

"Safe for other things, too, as you thought last Wednesday night," Galt snarled at him.

"I wasn't there last Wednesday at all, and couldn't have been in the evening." Martin looked uneasy, but added defiantly. "As a matter of fact the queerest thing happened Wednesday evening, as I've already told Jull. Someone I thought was Ruth rang me up about 7.30 asking me to meet her at nine at the Cavalier Oak, which is a mile away from the sandpit. I went there and hung about for an hour, but as nobody came I returned here."

"Anybody see you there?"

"Nobody would," Jull said as Martin shook his head. "Loneliest spot in these parts."

"*I'd* guessed it," Galt jeered. "You quite sure it wasn't you who rang *her* up at 7.30; not she you?"

"I did not!" Martin cried, a trifle wildly.

"But not in the sand pit where you usually met her," Galt said. "Oh, you *did* look there, but not seeing her, since she was buried, reported same to Jull so's he needn't look—very smart!"

Martin stood pale and flustered and Galt's sneering silence made the most of it, until, to the inspector's iritation, Low butted in, with: "You say you 'thought' it was Ruth 'phoning you; aren't you sure?"

"The voice was low and indistinct—and hurried, too, and I thought that might be because she was afraid of her aunt catching her, because, you see, she *said* she was Ruth. But since all this happened I'm naturally suspicious."

"You think it was a hoax, in fact?" Low said.

"Yes," Martin cried. "You can see why, yourselves; it was to rob me of a chance of proving an alibi."

"Ver-ry smart!" Galt mocked. "Got anybody to prove you took that message?"

"No," Martin admitted, sullenly. "Wednesday's the servant's evening out."

"Your stepmother or her son?"

"They were out motoring until 10.30."

"So there was no one here to say whether you took or sent a message, or whether you went out towards the Cavalier Oak, or back through your garden to the sandpit?" Galt said, grimly. "I'll have a word with your stepmother and her son, please."

The new Mrs. Bignor was a handsome woman; a tall blonde, but almost glacial in her aloofness. Otto was of the slightly effeminate type who plainly preferred to lounge through life at other peoples' expense; he did it now, in an easy chair, superciliously leaving all the talking to his mother. She was certainly mistress of this or any situation. She treated the detectives with cool disdain, showing plainly that she thought the Miltons merely blackmailers trying to frighten Martin into giving them money. As to her own interference, her mere tone made it sound absurd, she had considered Ruth so entirely unsuitable for Martin that she had never thought the matter worth bothering about.

She had nothing fresh to offer, even about the fateful Wednesday. Otto had motored her to the sea, while a breakdown near Four Winds, just this side of Glynd, had prevented them reaching home until 10.30. She had found Martin in the house, alone, yes, but quite normal—no, not a pleasant woman, Mrs. Bignor, but one who could be formid-

(*please turn over*)

able. They were glad to leave her alone and set about searching the house.

They found nothing incriminating at all until Galt demanded in his testy way if there were any kind of fire-arms in the house. Martin said no; his step-mother, that she had never allowed such things, but here Otto spoke for the first time :

"You're forgetting the automatic Martin bought last Christmas," he drawled, mockingly.

"What the devil are you talking about?" Martin snapped.

"Don't be silly, Otto," Mrs. Bignor said, frigidly. "That was only a toy."

"I thought we were all being silly and it was my turn to contribute to the general idiocy," Otto said, in his mincing way. "You know the one I mean! You got it at one of those novelty shops in town."

"Oh, that!" Martin shrugged, and to Galt, "That's his idea of being funny—it's one of those safety pistol things; you know, with the muzzle blocked up so you can only fire blanks. I bought it for a joke——"

"I'll have a look at it," Galt said, evenly. "Got it handy?"

Martin hadn't seen it for months, he said, but he thought it was in his workshop, so they crossed the little yard behind the kitchen to the shed. Even there it took them a long time to unearth it under a pile of metal junk.

"Here it is, I knew I'd tossed it away, anyhow," Martin cried, then his voice tightened. "Hallo! That's funny. Someone's cut the barrel off!"

"Yes," Galt said with curt satisfaction, as he took the small pistol from his hands. "Someone *has*, removing the blockage, too, an' so changed a toy into a killing weapon. Also, from the look of the bore, I'll lay that the bullet we get out of Ruth Laider's body fits it."

"But it's absurd," Martin cried. "I didn't cut that barrel off. I know nothing about it."

"That'll be for the jury to say," Galt told him. "I'm taking you to Glynd under arrest, Martin Bignor."

Galt was quite satisfied that this very natural solution of Ruth Laider's murder could be the only possible one. But others were not so sure. Low was more than ever suspicious of the general "obviousness." That a murderer should have drawn attention to himself in so many ways and then crowned his folly by leaving the weapon where it was bound to be found, seemed to him too good to be quite true.

"It's in keeping with the rest of his folly, as you'd see if you'd had my experience of village crime, and hadn't your mind full of clever ideas—such as this step-mother planting the murder on Martin for the sake of the will," Galt jeered.

Young Low reddened but said nothing, but he certainly did get from Martin the name of the Bignors' lawyer and also he began to make a number of inquiries independent of Galt.

P.C. Jull was also among the worried, but that was because he simply couldn't believe Martin was a murdering type, or even that the killing could be done with so trivial a weapon as that toy pistol. In fact before they left the workshop Galt had to explain to him in simple language how this kind of pistol had its barrel bored in the ordinary way, only, to prevent its being used for bullets, a disc of metal blocked it at the muzzle. By cutting away an inch of the barrel, as Martin had, the bore was free to fire bullets and kill, "An' it doesn't need even an engineer to do that with a hack saw," he ended.

"I suppose a file 'ud do it, too?" Jull muttered.

"Just as easily," Galt said. "What you hunting about that work bench for?"

"That inch o' barrel he cut off should be somewhere about," Jull said. "Finding it'll be evidence."

"Sure," grinned Galt, "But the pistol's all I need."

It seemed he was right. When he called them together, a few days later, to prepare the charge against Martin Bignor, the first thing he said was :

"Well, the case is water-tight, whatever your fancies, Low. The gunnery expert has certified that the bullet taken from Ruth Laider's heart was fired from that pistol."

"I think it was, too," Low said, with a dangerous glint in his eyes. "All I say is Bignor didn't fire it. After all, anybody could have cut that barrel off an' planted it in Bignor's workshed—especially the man who was always on the spot and told us it was there to find."

"Meaning Otto," Galt sneeered. "It would take a hell of a lot of evidence to prove it."

"I'm getting it," young Low said, tartly. "First take the will. Old Bignor left £65,000, and Martin gets practically everything, even the house, unless he dies first. But, mark this, if he does die first the present wife gets all!"

"What does she get now?" Galt asked uneasily.

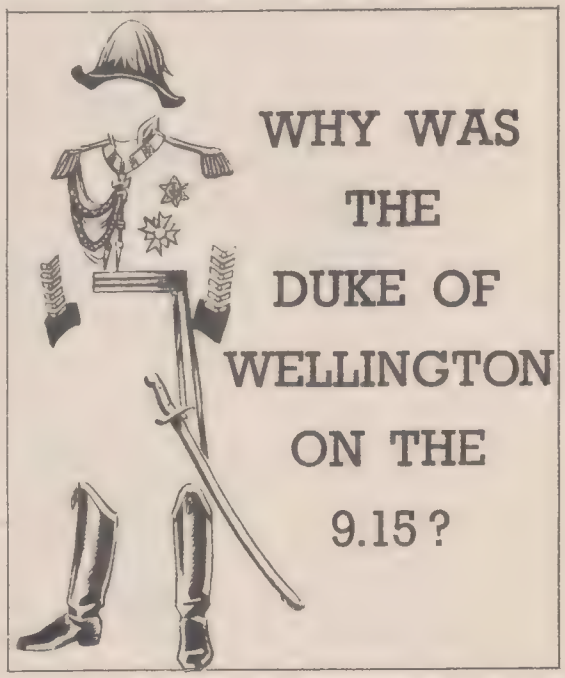
"Just £500 a year out of the interest, an' even that goes back to Martin when she dies. And Otto gets nothing—Well, do you think they're the kind to like dropping from wealth to what'll seem a mere pittance—especially when they can get the lot, if Martin dies?"

"Mere theory won't get anywhere," Galt shrugged.

"Here's a fact or two. Otto was one of those in the 'Diggers Arms' who noticed Ruth's habit of going to the sandpit to meet Martin. Then that motor outing of theirs—carefully taken on Wednesday, because the servant would be out and Martin wouldn't have witnesses to that 'phone call. Next the breakdown at Four Winds—only half a mile away from the sandpit *and* close to an A.A. telephone box; so useful for sending hoax messages. Finally, I've learnt that before her marriage Mrs. Bignor and Otto as well, were actors; that is, good at imitating voices, also so useful for hoax messages."

"Well, what do you make o' that rigmarole?" Galt muttered in an attempt at scorn.

"Plain enough," Low said, with growing elation. "This woman and her son saw in the Ruth Laider affair a way to get the fortune they were due to lose in five months' time, when Martin became twenty-five, and with little risk to themselves. Knowing all about Ruth, the sandpit and the pistol, they saw how easy it would be to murder her and fix the blame on Martin. And it *was* easy : they sent him off to the Cavalier Oak, where he couldn't expect an alibi, by the fake call, called up the girl, too, to make sure



of her going to the sandpit. But it was Otto who met her there. She knew him, so she wasn't afraid even when he stepped close to shoot her. Then he buried her so's she must be found soon and hid the pistol where we'd find it; even telling us about it. That's why the whole lay-out was so obvious—it was meant to be, to hang Martin and give them the money under the will!"

"All theory," Galt rumbled, uncomfortably. "Not an atom of proof anywhere."

"What about this then?" Low snapped. "Bignor *was* called that Wednesday at 7.30. I've seen the girl who was on duty at the local exchange. She don't remember much—where the call came from, or what the message was, for instance—but she's pretty sure of three things. It was a girl's voice that called him. He himself answered—she knows him well—an' there wasn't another call that evening—in or out! That is, she's sure Martin didn't call up Ruth, whom she also knows. It may not be everything, but it fits Martin's statement and will want a lot of shaking."

Galt sat scowling at young Low. He had nothing to say. He even looked at P.C. Jull, as though he hoped he'd help.

"Yeh, that's the way I think they worked it," Jull muttered, in his heavy way. "You see, I found out some things for myself—if you bring a search warrant we could go out an' prove things, I fancy."

"A warrant for the Bignors?" Low grinned.

"No," P.C. Jull said. "For the Miltons."

Mrs. Milton was in the shop and glared at them as they entered. She uttered a little cry as they pushed straight through into the parlour. Milton was in there, a ferrety, hard-faced man. He turned livid as he saw them, half rose from his chair and tried to cover up a pile of notes with the books he was working on.

"There's the reason of it," Jull said pointing to the notes. "You was right, Inspector, about his needing money to save his business. He's had to borrow quick from moneylenders to prevent hisself from being sold up—on his expectations, you see."

"But he couldn't expect anything from Bignor," Low frowned.

"No, it's Ruth Laider's £3,000," Jull said. "Mrs. Milton's the only relative an' gets that. First, I guess they thought they could get it out o' Martin Bignor with this jilting trick, but when Ruth spoiled that for them by refusing to agree, they made up their mind to get her money by killing her—they never did like her, anyhow; too much the lady."

"But the pistol, no getting over that. It was in Bignor's workshed," Galt muttered.

"Which is by the kitchen entrance, so that anyone using that entrance regular could slip into it any time he liked, look round, find that pistol—an' put it back after he'd cut off the barrel and done murder with it. An' Ted Milton, 'ere, used that kitchen entrance regular—he was the Bignor's baker. Called there every day."

Milton who had sat numb and terrified, pulled himself together.

"It's a lie!" he shouted. "You got nothing against me—where's your proof?"

"Mrs. Prevish give it me first," Jull said. "She complained to me that one o' the loaves you sold her had a lot o' steel filings in it. Meant nothing to me then, but when the Inspector, here, explained to me 'ow that pistol barrel had been cut off be a hack saw—*or a file*, I sort of saw 'ow such unusual things as steel filings might ha' got mixed with the dough in your bake-'ouse—a bake-'ouse being a nice, secret place for cutting barrels off pistols. Then I remembered 'ow 'ard pressed you was for ready money; and Ruth's £3,000; an' 'ow you'd never liked 'er; an' 'ow, o' course, it'd be easy for you to walk close up to her without frightening her in that sandpit . . . I was a bit worried about 'ow you managed to lure 'er there, but Mr. Low, 'ere, showed me 'ow easy that 'ad bin. I mean, just as your wife could fool Martin, be talking in that low, indistinct voice that sent 'im out to Cavalier Oak, so she could ha' fooled Ruth by saying that Martin had rung up while she was out, asking Ruth to meet 'im at the sandpit at nine—she need only 'ave said, 'The usual place,. at nine,' and Ruth would ha' known. . . ."

"It's lies!" Milton shouted again. "It's put-up lies. Where's your proof? You an' your steel filings, as if them or anything else couldn't have got into the flour at the millers. If that's all your proof——"

"I thought o' that, too," Jull said, dully. "You may ha' noticed I bin in an' out o' your shop studying things a lot lately. The inspector, here, said that the inch of barrel that was cut off that pistol would be evidence, and I bin thinking a lot about that. Not so easy to hide an inch o' steel barrel; I mean, chucking it away casual wouldn't do, you'd know it might be found accidental. You'd find a safe 'iding place for it till you was sure all danger was over. I bin looking for such a 'iding place, an' I think I found it. . . . Come out 'ere."

He led them to the shop, stood staring round, but especially at the window display.

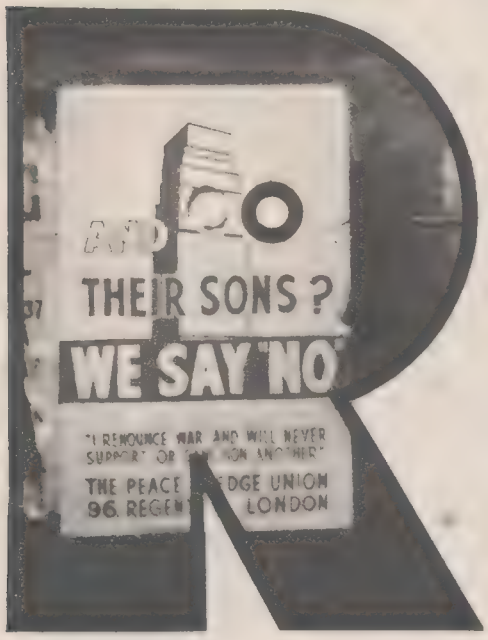
"A good 'iding place would be in something natural like, that don't come in for much use or 'andling. . . . Weddings is rare in this village, but bakers always show models o' wedding-cakes in their windows, and I notice that that one there was made just about the time Ruth went missing. . . ."

Mrs. Milton uttered a scream and flung her head into her arms on the counter in a fit of sobbing, as P.C. Jull took the model wedding cake from the window and began to break it up with his strong fingers. In a minute he displayed in his great palm an unmistakable section of a pistol barrel, foresight and all, but blocked by a disc at the end, and bearing the obvious marks of having been cut with a file.

"Natural for a man to think of his own trade as the best hiding place," he said, "but not natural to find a bit of pistol in a wedding cake. Evidence enough, I think, Inspector?"

"All we want," Galt said heartily. "That certainly came from the pistol that killed Ruth Laider—you're under arrest, Milton." And as he saw young Low's mocking eyes on him, said brazenly, "After all, these village crimes are simple enough, when you remember rustic greed. . . . Once you think of greed, the rest is so easy, that—why, even Jull could solve it."

THEY NEVER SEE



Red and yellow posters baffle the colour-blind

Each colour of the traffic light looks the same to 150,000 motorists

Doctor Haydon has made railways colour-proof

Over a million people in this country are unable to distinguish between red and green. Couple that with the thousands of traffic signals all over the country and you will see how important it is

BY KEITH ROGERS

MEN are the guilty as far as colour-blindness is concerned. Few women are afflicted that way. A mere 0.4 per cent. Yet they must be taken into account if we consider the fact that there are at least four million motor drivers in Britain. And we shall find that among these men and women there are some 150,000 who cannot tell a STOP signal from a GO except by its position on the post or the word "Stop" on the red light.

As that word is readable only when close to the lights, it does not have much effect. So we can safely say that 150,000 car drivers fail to distinguish the two signals except from their position on the pole. And that fact does not help them very much at night or in fog.

You will note I have not mentioned the millions of cyclists and the pedestrians who depend for safety on the same lights. In all there are over a million colour-blind people in Britain. People who "never see red."

At this point let me introduce Dr. Frank Haydon, expert on colour-blindness, who has just retired after devoting forty-five years to making railways colour-proof.

Dr. Haydon has eliminated the colour-blind railway employees on the Southern Railway from jobs where true sense of colour is essential.

Yet time was when guards who were colour-blind knotched their flag sticks so that they should know which was the red and which the green.

The danger of railwaymen being colour-blind is obvious. Think of a driver that cannot distinguish red from green signals. They *have* been known to exist. And the fireman of the Strasbourg express that crashed in 1934 was colour-blind. Two hundred and twenty people died in that crash caused because the train had passed four signals set against it. At the inquiry the fireman said, "I cannot distinguish between red and green."

You might not think it possible for a man to fail to see a bright goldfish close to him in a pond. Yet that has happened. Though the fish glistened in the sun it was completely lost to that man against a background of green plants. He was red-colour-blind.

Another man I knew painted his house a bright blue all over the outside in the belief that it appeared as a restful dove grey. Another friend of mine asked whether I would like some tomatoes out of his greenhouse. He instructed his son to collect some.

"Come and help me," said the boy, turning to me. "I cannot distinguish the ripe ones."

"Why," I said, "they are red instead of green. It's easy enough."

"I know," he replied. "But I have to squeeze them to find out. I cannot tell red from green. It's a nuisance because I am always swopping the wrong stamps at school."

Colour-blindness is hereditary. Why and what causes it in the first place none knows. Yet in most cases it is very definite.

I have seen Dr. Haydon, for example, test a colour-blind railwayman who has applied for a job. With a small lantern giving red, green or amber lights of different densities the fault was discovered in less than a minute.

Red, green and amber are hopelessly mixed up. It is amazing to watch and hear such a test.

That in itself is not complete, however. What is called the Holmgren Wool Test follows. You could try it yourself if you had the right colours of wool and a friend who is not colour-blind to watch for you.

All you want is a collection of pieces of coloured wools. Light and dark green, fawn, orange, yellow, various browns, blue, blue-green, purple, violet, light and dark red will do for a simple test. Someone holds up a green piece and the person being tested is asked to match it, picking out all the shades of this colour in the wools, which are piled in a heap on a table.

If normal vision is present, there will be no difficulty in the matter at all. But if there is colour-blindness the green will be "matched" with greys, browns and other drab colours.

The next test follows. A rose pink is produced, laid aside on the table and you are asked to match it. If you have "failed" the previous test you will proceed to pick out a collection of blues, blue-greens, greys and violets.

Then you are given a third test. A bright red piece of wool is held out. Your efforts to match it result in a collection of dark green and browns, olive greens and perhaps a dark grey.

No doubt about the defect in the colour perception. You will not distinguish between red and green lights very easily.

The effect of such a test seen by a non-colour-blind person is really startling. Few people have seen it.

Further tests are possible if desired. The Ishihara is probably the best. It is a collection of cards on which are numbers of coloured dots of varying shades. Among them is a numeral. The coloured dots are blended into the figure in such a way that though persons with perfect sight can see the figure plainly those who are colour-blind will see but a part of it.

The figures and coloured dots on the sheets are so arranged that they provide detection of the degree and type of colour-blindness present. It is amazing to see someone look at the sheet containing the figure 6 and call it a 5. Simply because the loop of the 6 is completed in colours similar (to colour-blind persons) to those surrounding it in the background.

Likewise an 8 turns out to be a 3 to the colour-blind. The rest of the figure is merged in colours that he cannot distinguish.

The effects of colour-blindness have never been closely considered, except by a very few specialists such as Dr. Haydon, yet they are many and sometimes serious.

Among sailors colour-blind look-out men are not unknown. Yet fancy such a man trying to distinguish port and starboard lights!

Not long ago a friend saw a motorist deliberately wait for the traffic lights while they were green and "go over" as soon as they turned red. There is no doubt he was colour-blind and if it had not been for expert driving on the part of a bus-driver he would have met with a nasty accident.

Another motorist was able to obtain acquittal in court not long ago on a charge of "going over" on the red by proving that the policeman who brought the charge was colour-blind. The light had been GREEN not red when the motorist passed it.

It is difficult to believe the effects of colour-blindness if you are not afflicted yourself. Look at the picture of the traffic light on the Embankment. It shows red, amber and a green "filtration" sign to the left. Yet a red or green colour-blind person would see all those lights, and they would all look the same colour to him!

For such people only different shapes of light or groups of lights form any real safeguard where traffic control is concerned. The Ministry of Transport should consider the idea very seriously. Colour alone is useless in fog or at night for the position of the light cannot be seen. Only shape can be a full safeguard—combined with colour for the non-colour-blind.

Loss of beauty in nature, art and even advertising occurs through colour-blindness. Many Christmas posters last year were almost, if not quite, undistinguishable to colour-blind people. A well-known newspaper van with yellow lettering on green cannot be of any value to thousands of people. The colour-blind will not distinguish the words against the green background.

Probably advertisers prefer to cater for the 96 per cent. of the males and give them ornamental posters and display cards, with green and red, blue and yellow intermixed. But they fail to attract the remaining 4 per cent.

Red and green meant nothing to the engine-driver whose engine was changed from brown to green without his knowledge. He saw no difference. Nor could a certain tailor distinguish colour effect in his materials.

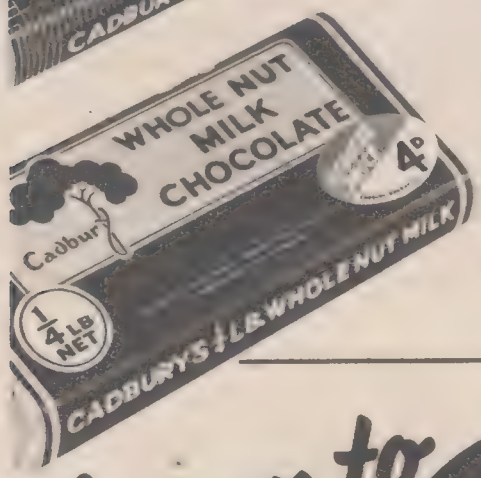
It was Dr. Haydon himself who found this man. He had asked for a fishing suit and was offered a "heather mixture" which was a combination of reds, greens and yellows of the brightest shades.

"Enough," says the doctor, "to frighten any self-respecting trout a quarter of a mile away."

Cadburys give you MORE for your money!

CADBURYS REDUCE PRICES

MILK FRUIT & NUT ~~4½d~~



and NUT MILK ~~5d~~

Down to 4D qtr. lb.

8D ½ lb

Hooray, hooray —

Cadburys lead the way — give you MORE for your money to-day! Two of the leading popular chocolate lines come tumbling down in price! Now you can buy a full quarter-pound of Milk Fruit & Nut *or* Nut Milk for only four pennies — or a full half-pound for only 8d. Don't wait — celebrate! — dash off and buy a block at the new low price NOW!

also BRAZIL NUT ¼ lb. reduced from ~~6d~~ to 4½d.

QUALITY GUARANTEED UNCHANGED

The CAMBRIAN COAST for carefree holidays

SOMETHING new, something strange, something restful, something stimulating, something right outside of everyday experience. That's the real thing in holidays, and nowhere will you find it so well epitomised as on the Cambrian Coast.

Stay at one of the famous resorts on this 70-mile stretch of holiday playground, and in between the more ordinary joys of bathing and basking, you can enjoy the rare scenes and experiences that only the Cambrian Coast provides.

Ascend Snowdon: visit the Devil's Bridge: thrill to the beauty of Barmouth Estuary and the grandeur of magnificent old Castles. With so much to do and see, your holiday time will prove all too short.

BEFORE YOU GO

Two books you should buy:—"HOLIDAY HAUNTS" 1938, containing Holiday Addresses, etc. (Price 6d.), "RAMBLES AROUND THE CAMBRIAN COAST" (6d.)

HOW YOU GET THERE

Cheap "Monthly Return" Tickets by any train, any day, from all parts

WHEN YOU GET THERE

Cheap 1st and 3rd Class Weekly Holiday Season Tickets will enable you to see the best of this lovely Welsh district

All information will gladly be supplied by the Supt. of the Line, Great Western Railway, Paddington Station, W.2, or can be obtained at any Railway Station or the usual Tourist Agencies.

GWR

CAMBRIAN COAST

WHAT PRICE BORROWED PLUMES

Auld Neil, the blind fiddler, and his companions, the wee kiltie, Hector, and Jock, the dog, are returning, after a long exile in the country, to the streets where they are known. And wee Hector is feeling just a little shy about having a kilt without a sporran

BY AUGUSTUS MUIR

ILLUSTRATED BY GAFFRON

HOME! There was comfort in the sound of the word as Auld Neil repeated it slowly to himself. On the morrow, the old fiddler, with Hector and the shaggy dog, would be back home at Habbie's Court in Edinburgh, after months of wandering in country places. He was looking forward to long evenings at the firesides of his old friends, and his heart warmed as he thought of the welcome he would receive from the ragged dwellers in that grey courtyard near the High Street. He felt like an exile returning to his native land.

"What's troubling ye, laddie?" he asked Hector as they sat together at tea in the shelter of a hay-stack, with the dog beside them waiting eagerly for the crusts.

Hector glanced up dismally. "My clothes is no' verra respectable to go home in."

Auld Neil cocked his head and looked at Hector critically through his dark spectacles. "That's ridic'lous! Ye've got a guid kilt, though it's a wee bit mended, and there's nothing wrong wi' your jacket. Put a new feather in your bonnet and ye'll look just grand."

"But I havenae got a sporran," explained Hector, indicating the vacant space in front of his kilt.

"Your ain fault!" said Auld Neil, sternly. "Ye lost your sporran that nicht ye got into mischief. Ye'll just need to gang home without one."

"I was thinking——" began Hector slowly. "I was thinking ye might like to buy me a sporran at that pop-shop in the High Street. Ye could get one for half a crown."

"Half a crown!" Auld Neil winced. "I'll no' agree to such extraivagance."

"But ye're to get five bob for playing your fiddle at the dance in the barn, to-night." Hector looked up at the old man with a cajoling smile. "Could ye no' spare the half of it for a sporran? I wouldnae like the lassies in Habbie's Court to laugh at me."

Auld Neil gave a splutter of rage.

"Lassies! So that's what's in your mind. Ye'll be seeing that lassie, Kirstie Graham. Ye'd like to strut in front o' her like a peacock, wi' a grand new sporran." He reached over and gave the boy a cuff on the head. "Pride—that's what it is! If I catch ye gallivanting with the lassies when ye get back—"

Hector avoided another cuff by edging quickly away and permitting Jock to occupy the space between him and the old man. The boy finished his tea in mournful silence.

"Can I come to the dance at the farm to-night, please?" he inquired, as he got to his feet.

"A dance is no' a place for wee laddies," declared Auld Neil, emphatically. "The farmer is letting us sleep in the hay-loft, and ye're to be in your bed afore it begins."

"Lawrie says there's to be plenty to eat—pies and cookies and lemonade."

"Ay, and an upset stummick the morn!" said Auld Neil. "Besides, who's Lawrie?"

"Lawrie Haggart. He's a ploughman on the farm—a verra nice man. I've been helping him wi' his work. He says he could get me in to the dance and I could sit in a corner——"

"—and eat pies!" added Auld Neil, with an angry snort. "I'll no' permit it. And if there's any dis-obedience," he added, wagging his forefinger in warning, "it's a thrashing for ye." He picked up his mug of tea and drained it as the boy moved away, kicking the tussocks of grass at the side of the pathway.

The friendly ploughman was sympathetic when Hector explained that Auld Neil had put his foot down.

"He'll no' let ye come to the dance, laddie?" said Mr. Lawrie Haggart. "He must be a verra strict man, yon fiddler."

"A grumpy auld deevil!" nodded Hector. "If I kind of jink round to the back o' the barn, could ye no' hand me out some pies?"

"Easy!" said Mr. Haggart, genially. "And twa-three cookies too. There's aye lots of chuck to spare at a barn-dance." Then he scratched his chin thoughtfully. "But the old fiddler's blind—he'd never see ye if ye came in."

"He'd ken I was there," said Hector, darkly. He did not dare admit to anyone that the eyes behind those tinted spectacles were remarkably sharp in spite of the "BLIND" notice that dangled upon the fiddler's chest.

"You nip round to the side door, laddie," said Mr. Haggart, handsomely, "and I'll slip ye out something to eat."

"I'll be there!" said Hector, confidently.

Later, in a field behind the farmhouse, he caught

(*please turn over*)

"I'm no' so sure about that," remarked Hector. "I had a fight wi' another laddie. I gied him what he deserved and he lost . . ."

sight of a boy who was engrossed in the task of throwing stones at a bottle. This must be Malcolm, he concluded ; he had heard that the farmer had a young nephew who was staying here for a few days. The boy's kilt swirled round his fat legs, as he made vigorous efforts to register a hit; but even when he spat on the stone for luck his aim was wide. Concealing his scorn, Hector walked forward.

"Hey, gie me a shot!"

Malcolm turned with a start and Hector picked up a stone. When he missed the bottle by no more than a few inches, the older boy gave a gasp of admiration.

"That's nothing. You watch me!" cried Hector, with a little swagger. "I'll nick it this time." From his pocket he pulled a catapult, slipped in a pebble and drew back the elastic with great precision. "Are ye ready?" There was a smash of glass as the bottle went into a hundred fragments.

"Oo—gosh!" Malcolm's eyes were wide with wonder and his podgy white cheeks seemed to shake with excitement. "I'd gie anything to hae a catapult like that. Would ye—would ye no' sell it? I've got tuppence."

"Tuppence!" ejaculated Hector, in disdain. "The elastic's worth a tanner. But I'll tell ye what. That's a braw new sporran you've got for your kilt. I'll swap ye my catty for it."

"Done!" Malcolm's eyes danced, and he began to unbuckle the leather pouch from his waist. Then his face lengthened. "I cannae risk it," he said, disconsolately. "I'd get a licking frae ma uncle. If he knew I'd given away my sporran——"

"Ye neednae let dab to him," said Hector.

"He'd see it was gone," protested Malcolm, sadly.,

"I've got a guid idea!" Hector stuffed the catapult back into his pocket. "I could fight ye for it."

"Fight?" quavered Malcolm.

"Ay! Ye could tell your uncle ye had a fight wi' another laddie and he pinched your sporran. Ye could show him your black eye to prove it. Ye neednae say it was me."

"But I'm no' very good at fighting," demurred Malcolm.

"All the better!" cried Hector. "It'll be easier for me. A black eye is no' verra sore."

"It's bad enough," objected the boy, producing a small bag of toffee-bools as a peace offering, and he made haste to change the subject. "Could ye no' lend me your catapult?" he pleaded. "I'll gie ye it back."

But Hector shook his head. "Ye might smash a window," he objected, "you no' being an expert, like."

Malcolm gave a sigh, and shifted his toffee-bool from one cheek to the other. "The old fiddler is to play at the barn dance to-night," he remarked. "There's to be a lot o' guid things to eat. Are you to be there too?"

Hector chuckled. "Ye ken Maister Haggart, the ploughman? He's promised to hand me out some pies and cookies at the side door."

An envious look crossed Malcolm's face. "And I'll be in ma bed!" he muttered, in disgust. "They send me to bed here at eight o'clock, as if I was a wee bairn. . . . See here, if I can sneak out, will ye go halves wi' the cookies?"

"I might," said Hector shrewdly, his eye on Malcolm's kilt. "I'll swap ye the whole lot for your sporran."

"Ye would?" Malcolm's eyes opened wide. "Ye'd hand over all your pies and cookies?"

"Ay!" Then Hector hesitated. "But if there's a bottle o' lemonade, ye'll gie me a wee drink?"

"It's a bargain!" said Malcolm, quickly. "I'll gie ye some lemonade—if I leave any . . . I'll hand over the sporran after I've had the cookies," he added. "I'll likely get a thrashing frae ma uncle, but it'll be worth it."

Hector pulled the catapult from his pocket. "I'll lend ye ma catty after all!" he said, in a sudden wave of generosity. "Ye can gie me it back to-night."

"I'll gie yè it back, cut ma throat," promised Malcolm, drawing his finger across his plump gullet. "I hope Maister Haggart doesnae forget to hand out the chuck."

And in his heart, Hector fervently echoed those pregnant words.

He did not know that the Fates were to conspire against Mr. Lawrie Haggart that evening. When the ploughman got home to his cottage on the hillside, and was shaving himself with great care at a cracked mirror which hung above the scullery sink, he noticed that his sister Maggie was curiously silent.

"What for are ye shaving yourself the nicht, Lawrie?" she inquired, in a slightly acid tone.

"I'm going to the dance in the barn," he replied, soaping his chin vigorously for the second time.

"Dance?" she repeated. The ring of surprise in her voice was none too well simulated. "A man o' your years, Lawrie Haggart, should fill his head wi' better things nor dances."

"Ou, there's nae harm in it, Maggie," he protested. "All ma life I've set my face against dancing, but I've changed ma mind. When a man's getting up in years, it's a verra guid thing to mix wi' young folk, now and again."

"Faugh!" snorted Maggie. "A lot o' young gad-abouts—that's what they are, thae young folk, nowadays."

"Ye're a bit old-fashioned, Maggie," he remarked philosophically, and applied the razor to his chin.

When he came through into the kitchen mopping his face with a towel, his sister gave him a quick glance. "Is Katie Proudfoot going to-night?" she demanded.

Lawrie looked startled. "Who told ye that?"

"Never you mind! I ken more than ye think. Ye were at a dance last week wi' Katie Proudfoot—ay, and another the week afore that . . . Ye bought a pair o' fancy, patent slippers to dance in——"

"I got them cheap for two bob." Lawrie coughed apologetically. "And Katie's a verra genteel young woman——"

"She's a gad-about like the others!" interrupted his sister angrily. "Looking round for a husband—that's what she is. Ye'd better be careful, Lawrie Haggart."

To conceal his blushes, Lawrie dabbed at his face vigorously, but made no reply.

"Have I no' kept house for ye all these years?" demanded Maggie. "If ye're fool enough to marry Katie Proudfoot, where will I be?"

"I wouldnae put ye to the door, Maggie," protested her brother.

"I've a guid mind to baste the life out o' ye, ye muckle thief!" His fists were waving in the air and he was known to be a dangerous man when his temper was roused. Lawrie stepped away. But the room was small and Dave McNey pinned him into a corner. "Off wi' them! The trousers—quick!"

"Mebby no'—but Katie Proudfoot would!" cried Maggie, wildly. "She's a hard-hearted besom. She's learned ye to dance just to catch ye."

"That's no' a verra nice way to speak about a respectable young woman," demurred Lawrie. He looked at his sister for a moment, then brought down his fist on the kitchen-table. "What's more, I'm going to the dance this nicht—and it's no' you that'll stop me, Maggie Haggart!"

With this parting shot, he picked up a candle and went through into the next room. Maggie could hear him searching in the chest of drawers and the cupboard.

"Where's ma Sabbath clothes?" he shouted presently. But she did not answer, and a couple of minutes later Lawrie came stamping back into the kitchen. "What have ye done wi' ma best clothes?" he repeated, eyeing her with suspicion.

"Clothes?" Maggie drew in a long breath. 'There, now! I clean forgot to tell ye, Lawrie. I sent them down to Stoddart the tailor's this evening."

"Ye what?" Lawrie's mouth opened as he gazed at her. "Ye sent away ma guid clothes?" . . .

"Ay, to be altered. The trousers is a wee thing short for a Sabbath suit."

"Nae such thing!" spluttered Lawrie. "I was wearing them well up, to show ma fancy socks——"

"—at dances!" nodded his sister. "What's more I sent a message for Stoddart to make the sleeves longer. There was ower much cuff showing for a Sabbath suit. That flamtoosh style might do for a dance, but it's no' decent for the kirk on the Sabbath." In Maggie's eyes there was a curious glitter; and her face wore a set look, as though she were repressing a smile of triumph. "I said for Stoddart to start on them right away."

Lawrie's wrath exploded. "Ye did it on purpose! . . . Fine did ye ken there was a dance this nicht. Ye sent my guid clothes to the tailor's to keep me away frae Katie Proudfoot."

"There's nae guid arguing wi' an angry man," remarked his sister philosophically, "Anything that keeps ye away frae Katie Proudfoot would hae the Lord's blessing, I'm sure."

"Ye blasphemous woman!" shouted Lawrie. "But I'm no' beat yet. I'll show ye—I'll show ye! . . ."

Maggie could hear him dressing hastily in the next room. Before very long he reappeared, wearing a resplendent collar and dickie with a made-up tie of mauve and yellow, while fully two inches of his detachable cuffs could be seen at his wrists. Under his arm was a small paper parcel containing his patent-leather slippers. At the sight of him, Maggie gave a cynical smile, for he still wore his corduroy trousers and old working coat.

"A fine ticket ye'll look in thae old duds!" she scoffed. "I'd like to see Katie Proudfoot's face when she catches sight o' ye."

But Lawrie ignored her taunts, and a few minutes later he was on his bicycle pedalling down the lane in the darkness on his way to the village. He pulled up at the shop of James Stoddart, the tailor, and knocked loudly at the side-door.

There was a shuffling of feet and Mr. Stoddart blinked out at him from the narrow, lamp-lit passage.

"Oh, it's you, Lawrie Haggart! Come awa' in, man. There's naething wrong?"

"It's that sister o' mine!" Lawrie tried to suppress his indignation. "Sending ye down ma best clothes to be altered, when she kens I was going to the dance up in the Maister's barn."

"Clothes to be altered?" Mr. Stoddart's wrinkled face had a blank expression. "There's been some mistake, Lawrie. She sent down nae clothes to me."

Lawrie peered at him in disbelief. "I'll stand none o' that!" he cried. "She's wheedled you into this. Come on—where's ma Sabbath clothes?"

"They werenae sent here!" protested Mr. Stoddart. "Sure's death, Lawrie. You and me is old friends—I wouldnae say it if it wasnae true——"

Lawrie's jaw dropped. "Michty me! Then she's hid them somewhere. I'm—I'm beat after all."

"I'm verra sorry," muttered the tailor. "Women folk hae a queer way of doing, whiles . . ."

Lawrie Haggart's eyes were roving round the stuffy little work-room. "Ye havenae a second-hand suit ye could sell me—or kind o' lend it for the nicht?" he inquired.

Mr. Stoddart shook his head. "I'd help ye if I could, but——"

"What's this?" Lawrie pointed to a dark checked suit that hung behind the door. "That looks verra genteel. . . ."

"That's Dave McNey's—I was mending a tear in the sleeve for him."

"I ken Dave," nodded Lawrie. "He works on a farm out Bankhope way. . . . Listen, man!" he cried suddenly. "Dave's away frae home just now. Could I no' wear this suit at the dance? He's just about ma height and build."

"He'll be back home the morn," protested the tailor.

"Then I'll be quite safe," Lawrie exclaimed. "See here, you go into the back room. I'll just put on Dave's clothes, and slip awa' up to the dance."

Mr. Stoddart stood rumpling his grey hair in doubt. "I dinnae like this, Lawrie," he said in a low voice. "I'd do anything to oblige an old friend, but——"

"Nae risk at all!" Lawrie assured him. "You're not supposed to ken anything about it. Folk at the dance will never notice I'm wearing Dave's clothes. Leave the door off the latch, and I'll slip back here and change after the dance. . . . Quick, man, quick!"

And he hurried the protesting tailor away, and rapidly dressed himself in Dave McNey's clothes, leaving his working garb rolled up in a bundle in the corner.

Lawrie arrived at the farm on the hillside when the first dance of the evening was coming to an end. Flushed and excited, he made his way over to the wooden bench where Miss Katie Proudfoot was sitting, and was just in time to prevent a lanky shepherd lad from becoming her partner in the next item on the programme.

"You're late, Lawrie," she said. "I was looking out for ye."

"It couldnae be helped," he told her. "Ma sister Maggie has been trying to make trouble about me going in for dancing. It's a verra fine exercise, I told her, but she wouldnae listen. Maggie's one o' the dour kind."

Miss Proudfoot wrinkled her pretty nose and

(*Please turn to page* 23)

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dismissed Maggie with a sniff. "Ye're looking very braw the nicht, Lawrie," she said coyly. "It's a new suit ye've been getting, surely."

Lawrie coughed. "Na, it's no' exactly new——" "I've never seen ye in it afore," she declared. "It's more genteel-like than your other."

"Ou, it's just a matter o' taste." Lawrie cleared his throat and hastily changed the subject. "Is ma dance steps improving? I've been practising them as ye told me."

"Ye're doing grand, Lawrie," she assured him, squirming slightly as he trod on her toes. "Does it matter if we sit out for a wee while? It doesnae do to tire yourself at the start."

"I'm always verra pleased to sit out wi' you, Katie," he whispered, confidentially. "There's a nice wee corner over yonder. If ye're dry, I'll bring ye a drink o' lemonade."

Miss Proudfoot danced the next with a young ploughman, while Lawrie sat twiddling his fingers impatiently, his eyes following her around the floor. His mention of lemonade to Katie had reminded him of his promise to slip out with some food for his young friend in the kilt and blue bonnet, who went by the name of Hector. A bright wee laddie, he reflected. . . . Probably he was out there now waiting hungrily at the side-door. But he'd just have to wait, for the dance was coming to an end and someone else might claim Katie. There were cheers for an encore, however, and the old bearded fiddler who had stood swaying beside the jangling piano struck up the tune once more, so Lawrie made his way to the big table where the food was laid out. The dairymaid in charge was a friend of his, and Lawrie Haggart slipped over to the side-door with a rich supply of pies and cookies under his coat and a bottle of lemonade in his pocket.

Outside, he looked about him, blinking in the darkness. "Are ye there, laddie?" he whispered.

Hector tiptoed forward. "Thank ye kindly, Maister Haggart!"

"Ye see, I've kept ma promise," said Lawrie with a chuckle. "If ye eat all that, I'm thinking ye'll hae a sore stummick. Aweel, I'll see ye the morn." He patted Hector on the shoulder and hurried back into the barn.

The encore was short and Lawrie was quick to pounce forward and claim Katie for the next dance, giving her late partner a jealous scowl as he offered his arm.

"If ye'd like to sit out, Katie——" he began, when someone smote him vigorously on the back and a hearty voice exclaimed:

"I didnae ken you were a dancing man, Lawrie Haggart! How are ye?"

Lawrie swung round and his heart missed a beat.

"Dave McNey!" he stammered. "I—I . . . Oh, I'm fine. How's yoursel'?" His mouth had gone dry and deep inside him there was a cold, sinking sensation. "I—I thought ye were away frae home . . ."

"I got back this evening," said Dave, in high spirits. "Some other lads frae Bankhope were coming along to the dance, so I thought I'd come wi' them . . . Is Miss Proudfoot booked for the next one?"

"Sorry, I'm dancing this wi' Mr. Haggart," she informed him with a smile. "If ye're free for the one after——" But she did not complete the sentence, for Dave interrupted:

"Man, Lawrie, ye've got clothes the verra spit o' mine!"

Lawrie gave an awkward cough, which ended in a strained laugh. "There's the music starting—mebby me and Miss Proudfoot should . . ."

But Dave McNey refused to step aside. He was eyeing Lawrie's clothes with some curiosity. "This is verra queer," he said, pointing to the sleeve of the coat. "Ye've torn yours in the same place. See, there's the mend."

"That's most extraordinar', Dave!" Mr. Haggart felt himself breaking out in a cold sweat. "Fancy me getting a tear in the same sleeve. Did ye catch yours on a nail?"

He fumbled for a handkerchief to mop his brow, conscious that Katie Proudfoot was looking at him in perplexity. He decided that his only hope was to cut Dave McNey short with an air of swaggering unconcern; and he began to stuff the handkerchief back into his pocket, when Dave's eye fastened upon it. With a surge of dismay, Lawrie noticed that it was a large red silk one with yellow spots.

"Hey, that's ma hankie," Dave burst out, and snatched it from Lawrie's trembling fingers. "See there! Can ye no' read? Ma own initials."

Lawrie's mouth opened, but no words came forth. Dave McNey had gripped him by the arm, and was leading him from the dance floor. Lawrie was hardly conscious of what was happening and even Katie Proudfoot was now forgotten. He would have given a lot at that moment if the earth could have opened and swallowed him up, and he found himself in a small room at one end of the barn with Dave McNey's angry face thrust close to his own. In the light of a lantern which stood on a corn-bin, Dave's eyes seemed to flash like bright daggers.

"Ye're wearing ma clothes, Lawrie Haggart! Where did ye get them?"

"It's—it's verra difficult to explain," quavered Lawrie. "I'm fair muddled . . ."

"Ye'll be more muddled when I'm done wi' ye!" Dave McNey closed the door and returned in a truculent attitude. It was evident now to Lawrie that Dave had been partaking of liquid refreshment and he was in a fighting mood.

"I've a guid mind to baste the life out o' ye, ye muckle thief!" His fists were waving in the air and he was known to be a dangerous man when his temper was roused. "Off wi' thae clothes—or I'll tear them from your back!"

Lawrie stepped away. But the room was small and Dave McNey pinned him into a corner. "Off wi' them!" A big brown fist was shaken in front of his face and, reluctantly, Lawrie began to take off the coat and waistcoat.

"I'll pay ye for the lend o' them, Dave——" he began, but Dave jerked the garments away.

"The trousers—quick!" He gave Lawrie's braces a wrathful tug.

"I cannae do that——" But Dave was already helping him, and a couple of minutes later the suit was being rolled up into a bundle.

"That'll learn ye to steal other folk's clothes, Lawrie Haggart! I'm thinking ye pinched them frae the tailor's shop. Another word, and I'll tell everybody at the dance. How would ye like that, eh?"

"It would be awfu' . . . But ye cannae leave me in ma shirt-tail, Dave!" pleaded Lawrie, his teeth chattering.

"There's a horse-blanket over yonder," growled Dave angrily. "Ye can go home wi' that draped round your shanks after the dance . . . What's more, it's me that's dancing wi' Katie Proudfoot this nicht! But we're going out for a nice walk first—and we'll no' hurry back, neither!"

With a groan, Lawrie pushed a bench over to the door to prevent the entrance of any courting couples who might be seeking a little solitude. Then he sat down and drew the horse-blanket around his shivering body.

"Is that a guid pie?" asked Hector, wistfully. He stood among the shadows in the yard and watched Malcolm devouring the good things which he had faithfully transferred to his companion.

(*please turn to page* 44)

From Norway comes this method of house expansion—the insertion of a new ground floor. The whole house is gradually jacked up and the occupants continue to live at home whilst this goes on

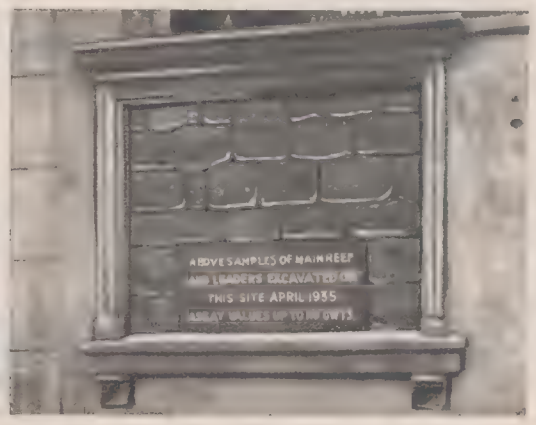
At Kersey, Suffolk, a real 'stallion's tail indicates the home of a veterinary surgeon. Thereby hangs another tale

"Insertion of False Teeth and Eyes, Latest Methodists." Damn clever, these Chinese!

CURIOSNAPS

"Passing Show" readers who send in original photographs of queer sights suitable for this feature receive 10/6 for each picture published. They should enclose stamped envelope.

Not the local lockup, at Carey, in Caernarvon, but a rubbish bin, built to the order of the local squire who objected to dirty, untidy streets

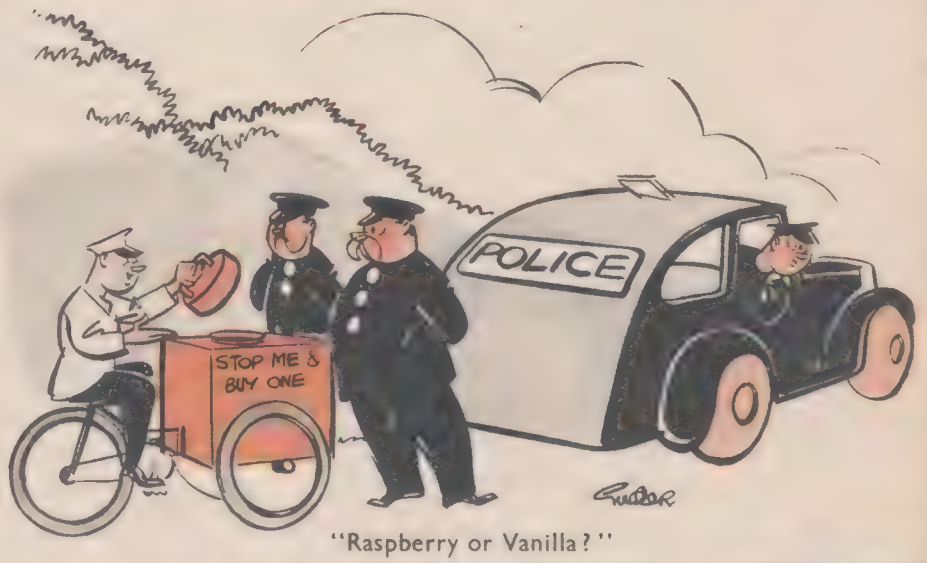


A rich gold reef was discovered while digging foundations of this garage in Johannesburg, South Africa. It runs under the street and is not allowed to be mined

Laugh

The "PASSING SHOW

Foreman: "Come on, back to work now!"



"Raspberry or Vanilla?"

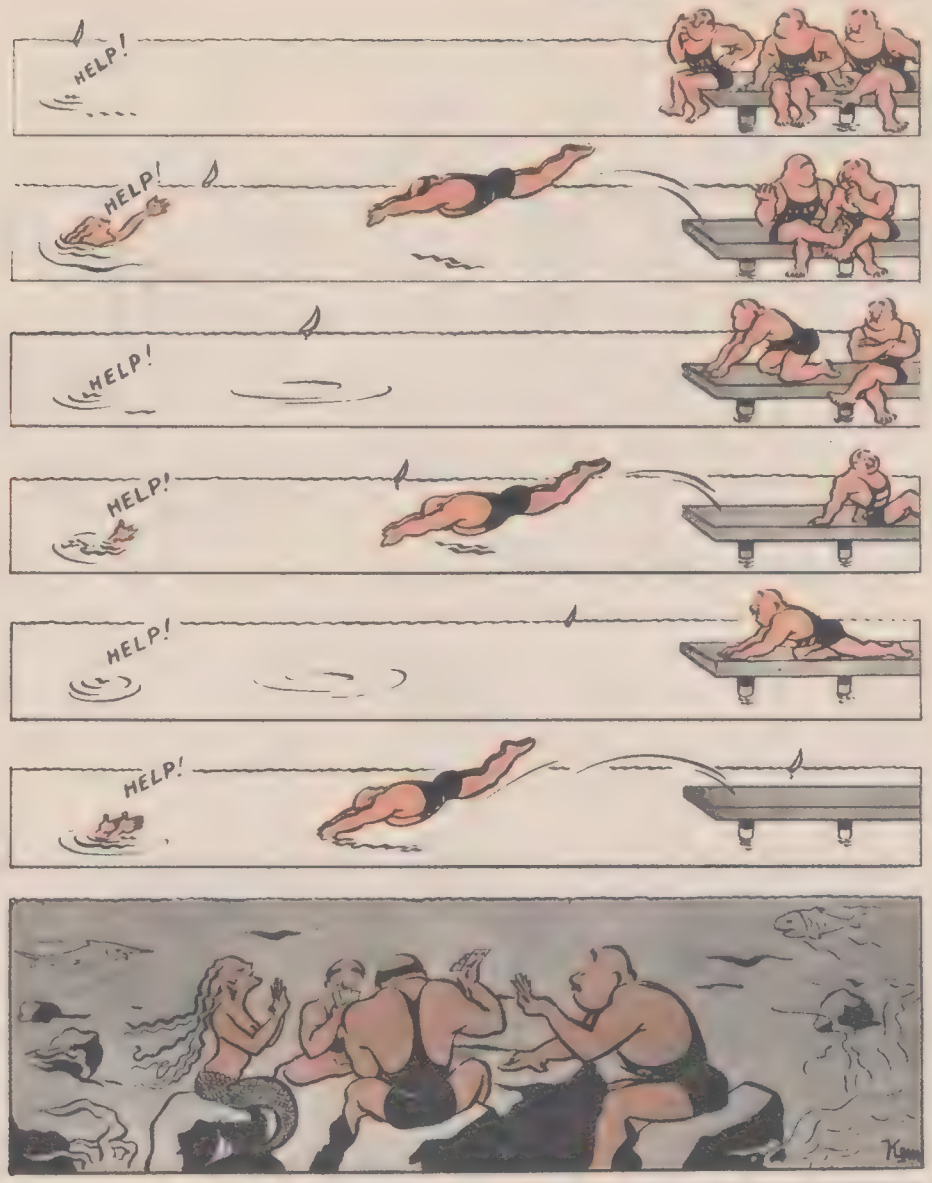
"Ever since we've been on this run, I've been intending to bring my rod."

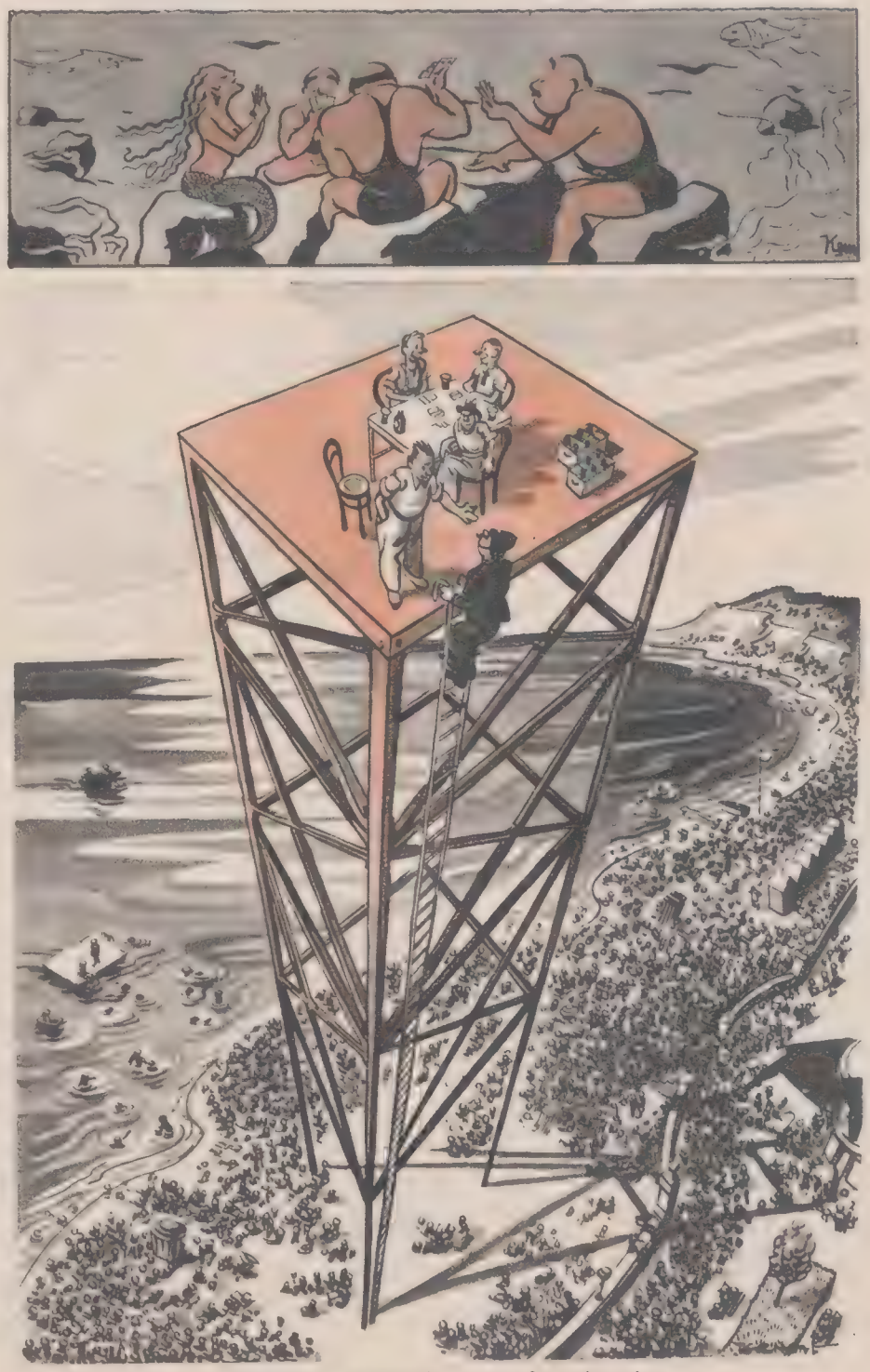
"Oh, those are two hotel commissionaires!"

...olkter

SHOW" Smile Section

"Having a fine time here in England. Kind regards to all. Yours affectionately, Big Eagle."





"We only knocked it up for the day, constable—to get away from the crowds!"

A MAN AND THE GYPSIES

By A. C. BARRETT

"Was it you who wrote the book '1000 Ways of Earning a Living'? I bought a copy and read it and now I have to go round begging."
"Yes, that is one of the ways of getting a living."
Enrolig Half Timma, Gothenburg.

The Wild West pastor was preaching on the duty of wives.

Pastor: "Unfortunately, there is a woman in my community who leaves much to be desired in respect of obedience to her husband. To make an example I shall throw my book at her."

He raised the book and every married woman in the congregation ducked.—*Vart Hem, Stockholm.*

Chief: "Any orders whilst I was out?"
Clerk: "Yes, a man came in and ordered me to hold my hands up whilst he took the till."—*Koprive, Zagreb.*

Mother: "Are you not ashamed of being so naughty? Shall I get the cane?"
Tommy: "No, I would rather be ashamed! It does not hurt so much."—*Humoristicke Listy, Prague.*

THE GETAWAY

CAMEO STORY
by
T. Norman Hinton

THE chiming of the Town Hall clock, striking eleven, had shattered the night air and the echoes of the last booming note reverberated still. Behind the locked doors of the bank, the bell's sepulchral toll produced a responsive vibration in the brass filigree-work of the counter-grille, which trembled unmusically for awhile and then was still.

In a corner at the back of the darkened room the heavy hinges of the safe door creaked as its bolts were shot home again. Without any attempt at haste the man who had closed it turned away, quietly slipping into his pocket a bunch of keys, duplicates of those in the possession of the chief cashier. It was already decided how he should dispose of those keys, once he had locked the bank's outer door behind him, so that no prowling policeman, finding it insecure, should give the alarm.

Moving quietly in the stillness of the night, he sidled up to the long desk in the middle of the room behind the tellers' counter. The shaded light threw a sickly greenish glow over his countenance.

On the pavement beyond the drawn blinds, the measured beat of footsteps could be heard and the man looked up from his work. He did not stir as the policeman tried the door. . . .

Apparently satisfied that all was safely locked and in order, the constable moved off and as his footfalls died away in the distance, the man in the bank quietly opened a drawer in the desk at which he crouched, and, extracting a book, opened it.

Evidently he knew where to look for what he wanted, for he found the right page straight away, his practised eye travelling down the cash columns as he made a mental note of the items that would require adjustment, if his plans were to work out aright. Then, taking up a pen, he first tried the point of it before dipping it carefully in the ink.

There was much for him to do, for in a few hours he would be stepping aboard the boat—unless anything turned up to prevent his doing so!—and he did not want any mistake in the arrangements he was making.

Only the regular half-minute click of the electric timepiece on the wall disturbed the silence, as he bent over the white page, altering a figure here and a figure there, neatly, with the penmanship of one well versed in the art. The Town Hall clock outside chimed the quarter-hour.

Pausing for a moment, he took from his pocket the accommodation-plan of the boat on which he had arranged to sail. A complete change of clothing was ready packed in a small suitcase concealed under the counter and he smiled, a trifle sardonically, at the fleeting thought of what any of the bank's wealthy clients would say if they met him in the guise he would don so soon.

Had he left himself enough ready cash? It would never do to run short; nothing could ruin his plans with greater certainty—or with consequences more dire. But yes; surely he had allowed enough for all eventualities.

The Town Hall clock struck the half-hour—half-past eleven!

◆ ◆ ◆

In another half-hour it would be to-morrow and he could really say his holiday had begun. He would be down on the Broads before lunch and the boat was promised to be all ready. He looked at the cash-account again. Yes, they couldn't possibly eat more than 1 lb. of bacon per day, between the five of them. Say 1s. 8d. a day for bacon, fourteen days—that's £1 3s. 4d., divided by five (for each member of the party would pay his own share) equals 4s. 8d. each. And surely it wouldn't be necessary to allow so much for sausages and raspberry jam? Knock off another half-crown—that would leave 34s. 6d., which ought to be ample for pocket money.

He put on his coat and switched off the green-shaded desk-lamp, fully satisfied with his budget. It had been worth while staying an extra half-hour to finish it, having already had to work late on the half-yearly balance.

For one cannot be too careful about holiday-budgets, when one is a bank clerk, earning £3 2s. 6d. a week.

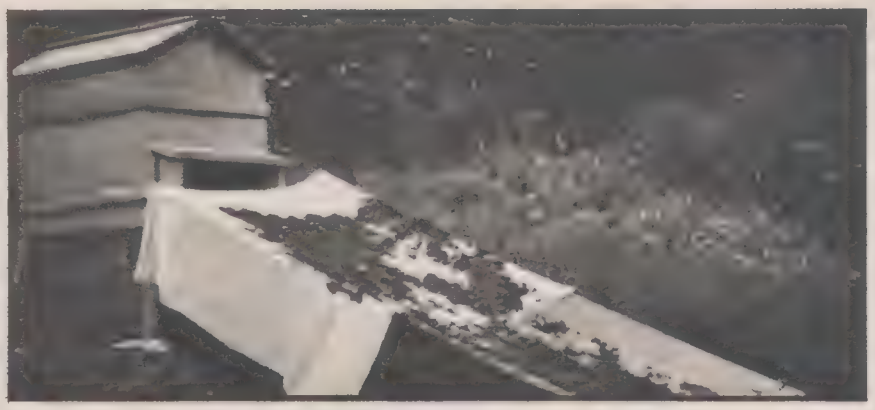
"Except for a little accident with the car, we had a fine tour."
Das Illustriete Blatt, Frankfurt.

SWARM WEATHER TROUBLE

VAST AREAS of open heath land in England might be profitably used for the revival of an old country industry that is full of sweetness

BY S. L. BENSUSAN

(photographs by Eric Hosking)



These pictures illustrate the gentle art of coaxing a swarm of bees into the hive. A swarm usually takes place on a very hot day and the queen bee eventually settles on a branch, or something of the kind, while the workers gather round her. After discovering the swarm, our bee-keeper cautiously shakes the bees into a box, making sure that the queen goes in.

Wrapped in a sheet, the box is carried to the hive at dusk, where the bees are gently shaken out on the runway. The queen staggers slowly towards the entrance of the hive, followed by the rest of the bees, and they all go back to their own sweet home. The rest is honey !

WHAT is the first real sign of summer to come somebody asked. The song of the chiff-chaff, first of our migrants, was the ready reply, but I thought that the cleansing flights of the bees that have lived as best they can, cribbed, cabined and confined, was a still surer indication.

So the talk wandered to bees and those who have written about them, and of the hundreds of apiarists who loved the hives but could not set the story down with sufficient appeal to win more than passing notice.

My own beemaster, gone to his rest these thirty years, was a very old countryman who did not stand more than five feet high. He had an untidy white beard, moving in a very slouching fashion on flat feet and possessing no dignity at all, until he went to his half dozen skeps in a frame built against the garden wall and the four bar-frame hives that he looked upon with a certain suspicion, declaring that they were new-fangled and that bees never felt warm or comfortable in them.

Once he was with the bees he assumed a certain dignity. He was a veritable bee master. He would drive bees from a full skep to an empty one; he would lift up the frames from his more modern hives and tell you where the nectar came from; he would plunge bare hands into a skep full of bees he had drawn from their home.

He laughed at veil and gloves and as he handled his stocks spoke to them as though they could understand his friendly words. It was a rare event for him to be stung, and when this happened he would stand quite still to give the bee a chance of withdrawing the sting, as is possible when the barb has not penetrated too far. If this restraint failed and the stinger was disembowelled in its efforts to get free, he always had a word of regret. He did not like bees to die.

He came from a family of beekeepers. His father, he told me proudly, used "to sting the gentry" in other words, when sufferers from rheumatism came to him, he would pick up a bee and place it on the affected part. He taught me how to pick up bees or wasps without any fear of their effective resentment.

Already nearing his eightieth year, rheumatism, that scourge of the countryside, had passed him by. Indeed, he assured me that he had never really known what it was to be ill, and he thought that the honey had befriended him.

"We were the healthiest child'en up there," he said, referring to the village main street, "not that father had better money than anybody else, but because we always had a bit of honey to go on our bread, and when we grew up and went on the land there'd be mead for the boys."

Extractors were unknown then. The comb was broken and tied up in muslin to drip into a bowl, in a shed that was insect proof. Strips of brown paper were used to keep out intruders where boards had sagged.

My teacher had inherited his father's honey jars and would not sell any honey until he had what he considered a year's supply for himself, wife and daughter. Money from the run honey and the wax he melted from time to time for floor polish, went to enlarging the apiary. It had paid for the bar-frame hives and a shed and the little extractor he learned at long last to use in it. And every now and again he would go off for twenty-four hours to visit some old beekeeper living within distance of those painfully flat feet, or the carrier's cart; the visit would be returned and you might have the luck to talk beekeeping with a couple of veterans who had all manner of knowledge that never finds its way to books.

He planted flowers for his bees, knowing just what they liked and, in a country of wild white clover and lime trees, he could always be sure of a bountiful harvest, if only the summer would be kind.

Sitting by the side of the hives, watching the foragers coming home and noting the colour of their bags, he could tell, within a little, where his bees had been working. He knew the origin of all pollen and the colour of the nectar would tell him whether the work was carried out in field or orchard. He could say just when the hive was about to swarm and would go through the bar-frames and cut out queen cells if he didn't want the swarm.

He would admit, a little grudgingly, that it was easier to hold back a swarm in one of "them contraptions" than in the straw skep.

He had but to set his ear to a hive to know if all were well, and he taught me the sounds that tell of swarming, of thunder in the air, or of a hive that had lost its queen. He told me once that when he sat by his open fireplace in the winter, with logs piled and a glass of old mead within reach, he was always thinking of the time when the bees would wake up again.

"There's whiles I wonder if I'll be there when they come out," he said to me more than once in the years when the doubt was apparent and in brief hours when he was about to leave the world behind, the watchers by his bedside said he was talking to bees that only he could see.

For many years I kept hives on a fairly large scale. I even wrote a bad book about beekeeping, but the deadly acarine disease put an end to my profitable and pleasant industry. In a very few years, no more than six or seven, I had trebled the small capital invested, set up a complete equipment of extractors, ripeners, cans and bottles and held a stock of a quarter of a ton of run honey.

The hours spent in the orchard where the hives were set travelled on swallow's wings, and gave me one of the most wonderful sights I have ever seen—a luminous swarm. It flew into the eye of the sun and the light took all their colours and left them a glittering mass of opals, pearls or diamonds, as they moved from the full glow to partial shade.

My old friend and teacher followed his swarms with a frying pan and the key of his cottage door, but he was careful to explain when I found him making bee music of the harsh kind for the first time, that it was not designed, as many supposed, to persuade the bees to settle. They would have decided which tree to swarm on before they left the hive, having sent out advance guards to find a suitable site. But when he had been a boy and there were beekeepers in the neighbourhood, men followed their swarms with key and pan that they might retain ownership in them. The noise constituted the claim and it was never disputed. Sometimes he checked swarming by aid of his watering can which had a rose at the end.

He would hold this as high as he could over the hive from the back, and when the bees heard the sound of what they took to be rain, and felt a few drops, they would give up their plans for the day. Their time for swarming is the morning hours round about midday when the air is warm.

Feeding his stock with part of their own surplus, he would have scorned the idea of giving them syrup or candy. If they were to be healthy they must have the food they gathered, he said.

"You gotter deal honestly along o' y'r bees an' they'll do honest along o' you," was his dictum and, most modest of men, his voice always assumed a certain authority when he spoke of his hives.

If you travel the countryside to-day you must search diligently to find a skeppist. The old hive had too many drawbacks though I am inclined to think that when the bees themselves had excluded all the draughts with the propolis that they can produce at will, it was warmer than any other hive and consequently more resistant to disease.

The latter-day method is, of course, to commercialise the apiary, to turn bees into factory workers, to use giant extractors and ripeners, even to change the nature of the honey by feeding syrup to the colonies quite close to the hive, so that the foragers have no need to range and no need to exhaust their energies in a couple of months or less, as so many do in the season of honey flow.

It goes without saying that flower nectar and syrup are very different constituents and that the product derived from the latter is only honey in the legal sense of the term. But it can be described as pure English honey and only those who buy such stuff can suffer. Those who sell it thrive.

Cheap foreign honey, glucose and synthetic perfume can be added, I am told, so that it is possible to buy honey smelling like a lime tree in flower, though it is, to all intents, a factory product.

When I hear of these things my memory turns to "old George" and the brotherhood of sturdy, skilled, honest men to which he belonged. I remember, too, how a man who knew what he was talking about explained that the production of honey in our countryside could be magnified tenfold, yet leave vast stores of nectar untapped.

You can't keep bees in suburban gardens, for you would be responsible if they attacked your next door neighbour, but there are, in England, vast areas of heath land that would serve for the establishment of a profitable industry that might be run on clean lines.

THEY SAILED FOR SENEGAL

BY WILSON MACARTHUR

ILLUSTRATED BY W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

THROUGH the incompetency of Vicomte de Chaumareys, a nobleman who has come into his own again with the restoration of the French monarchy and the final defeat of Napoleon, the frigate *Medusa*, carrying the governor, Col. Julian Schmaltz and his family, to take over the colony of Senegal from the British, runs aground on the dreaded Arguin Bank, off the coast of Africa. Attempts to re-float the vessel fail and plans are made to leave the wreck and put the ship's company ashore, so that they might travel on to St. Louis on foot. While the governor and the naval officers, accompanied by higher civil servants and seamen are to use the ship's boats, a huge raft, constructed of timber, has been built to carry the military escort, accompanying the governor, stores and bullion. News that the ship is to be abandoned has caused a frenzy of looting among sailors and soldiers and there have been wild outbursts of fighting and drinking as the men jettisoned stores and baggage. They are still befuddled when a storm arises to shake the crippled frigate and the terrified commander, refusing to see the utter confusion on board, orders his drunken crew and bewildered passengers into the boats. . .

DUROYS DE CHAUMAREYS issued the command to abandon ship before the officers could get to their stations, or collect their boats' crews together, before any semblance of order had been restored. It was given precipitately; it was obeyed with equal precipitation.

Immediate pandemonium. A swarm of people rushed for the accommodation ladder, which became instantly jammed, packed with struggling humanity. A terrific battle raged round it. Men, desperately fighting their way back out of the press, grabbed rope ends and flung themselves into the boats from the forecastle head, from the bulwarks, from the rigging.

Discipline vanished. There was a general shout. Every man for himself! *Sauve qui peut!* Men were hurled overboard, pushed off the ladder. The sea swarmed. Yet, oddly enough, no one was drowned.

Passengers had to wait. Reynaud, who was to have charge of the governor's boat, managed to cast off as soon as he had taken on board the requisite number of sailors, and so saved her from being overcrowded; young midshipman Rang was equally prompt, in the captain's boat, and both moved well away and lay, side by side, watching the struggle and awaiting the signal to approach and take off their respective passengers.

M. Picard had done his best to get himself and his family down into Lapeyrère's longboat, but he had been beaten back. M. Brédif joined him, carrying only a very small bundle of indispensable things. Everything else he possessed had been already pilfered. He managed to get hold of the engineer, de Chasteluz, who was to have command of the yawl, and drew him aside.

He produced a wash-leather bag, containing eight hundred gold francs.

"It is almost certain to be stolen," he said, urgently. "I beg of you, monsieur, be so kind as to take charge of half for me."

He handed over four hundred gold francs, which de Chasteluz hid as well as he could about his person, before making his way down into the yawl. M. Brédif watched him rowing away from the frigate with very mixed feelings.

The raft was still moored alongside. Lapeyrère, seizing hold of some sailors who had not given themselves up to the general orgy of drinking, set to work to transfer the provisions to it. The wine went first—a considerable supply, then some barrels of flour and biscuit. But almost immediately his work was interrupted.

Colonel Poincignon, followed by his officers, ventured out at last on deck. So far, the soldiers had not joined in the scuffle; but Poincignon was acutely disturbed.

"We must disarm the men," he declared.

"But when we land, sir—if we are attacked by the Moors——"

"No matter. That contingency can take care of itself, when it arises. Meantime, are we to have our throats cut by our own soldiers?"

The officers submitted.

"Sound the fall-in," Poincignon ordered, and stood waiting, strained and anxious. Bugles sang, high over the uproar on deck and immediately Poincignon felt the keenest relief. In fact, out of the whole tragic and deplorable muddle of this embarkation the discipline of the soldiers seemed the only thing to have been saved.

Terrified as they had been, suspicious as they still were, and ready for mutiny, they appeared to realise that in this crisis their moment had come to display those qualities that were traditionally theirs.

They poured up on deck, fully equipped, and paraded smartly, answering the call of the bugles without hesitation. At least they would leave the ship in good order.

They fell in. Poincignon addressed them, in firm tones that disguised the measure of his relief and of the terror that had almost unnerved him a moment before.

"Only essentials may be taken off. You will leave your arms behind."

A start of surprise rippled along the ranks, a moment's consternation. Without weapons, one was no longer a soldier, one was at the mercy of those accursed matelots—and of one's officers.

A long moment of suspense. Then muskets, cartridge belts, sabres, haversacks were piled on deck. The men fell into their ranks again, stripped of their weapons, defenceless, yet still trusting, still under control. A few only, retained their sidearms, perhaps forgotten in the general surprise.

A quantity of arms and ammunition was transferred to the boats. One could not afford to forget that soldiers without arms were not soldiers; and, after all, once safely ashore, soldiers would be required again. The essential thing was to separate them from their arms until they were required.

Embarkation began. In good order they filed down the accommodation ladder. The raft, as they stepped on to it, pitched and heaved under their feet, it seemed pitifully small, and water sluiced up between the planks. The first batch, of fifteen men, was herded together and driven forward under the sharp eyes of their officers. They had tacitly overlooked Poincignon's order, or had assumed that it did not apply to them, for they had retained their arms, and were ready now to quell the slightest sign of insubordination.

Those first fifteen men showed how badly worked out the governor's calculations had been. In the centre of the raft was a slightly raised platform, but this was for the officers. Already the raft, with the weight of the first batch of men, was awash. As more and more trooped on board, it sank lower, until they waded ankle deep, and the seas swept along it unchecked. The spars and masts, of which the raft was chiefly constructed, worked in their lashings, so that it was almost impossible to maintain a foothold, and the men staggered and clung to each other for support, their terror, until now held in check, beginning to grow.

"We're sinking!" someone cried, and the shout was taken up.

"The raft is sinking! It's sinking under us—we're going down!"

One of the soldiers, up almost to the waist in water, seized hold of a cask and hurled it off the raft. Others followed suit. Terrified, desperate, they pitched over whatever they could lay hands on, to lighten the raft and keep it afloat.

Some of the officers intervened, seeking to quieten them.

"You fools! We're not sinking! There's no danger—the raft is perfectly safe."

All the same, it was floating now well below the surface, and only the platform was visible. The men, packed tightly together, were knee-deep, in places waist-deep. However, the officer was right—it was not sinking any lower now; it seemed to have found its level. The soldiers quietened down gradually.

For half a minute a fierce struggle for possession took place. Bredif was desperate, knowing how much depended on quick victory. Once let these fellows start firing. . . .

"It won't be long, men. They'll soon tow us ashore. Nothing to fear . . ."

"All very well but——"

"Only a few bad hours, and we'll be there," an officer assured them, from the platform. But it was useless.

Men rushed to the side. Before officers could interfere, a number of them, overcome already by terror of the raft, which was drifting rapidly, leapt into the sea and regained the frigate. One of the younger army officers, Lieut. Paulin d'Anglas de Praviel, dived over and swam after them, determined to trust his life to the wreck rather than remain on the raft. It took him nearly an hour of battling with the sea and the tide to reach safety—the temporary safety of the frigate's deck.

M. Picard and his family were still aboard the frigate. He had done his best to secure places in one of the boats, but it was impossible for one man to conduct four ladies and four children in arms through the howling mob that swarmed round the accommodation ladder.

He knew perfectly well that he had been assigned to Lapeyrère's longboat; but what hope was there of that when all discipline had vanished in the general stampede; this atrocious and desperate *sauve-qui-peut*? Lapeyrère himself had not troubled about him. He had got down into the longboat and left M. Picard and his family to look out for themselves.

The more important passengers, admittedly, had fared better. As opportunity occurred, one or another boat would run alongside the ladder, and people would be rushed down safely. Thus, Francine had found her way into the captain's boat, and the governor's ladies were securely ensconced in the barge.

Charlotte Picard, less terrified than the others by the milling swarm of sailors, soldiers and workmen, pushed her way to the rail and called out to the officers of the various boats. Not so long ago, they had been diligent enough in their attentions to her and her sister; now they chose to ignore her; they did not hear her calling to them.

The barge itself approached, with Reynaud and Chaudière anxiously awaiting the moment when the governor should be taken off. Desperately, Charlotte called to Mlles. Schmaltz, who throughout the voyage had been disposed to be graciously friendly towards the young ladies, their only possible companions on the frigate. The barge was not half-filled; there would be ample room for the whole Picard family and many more. But the Misses Schmaltz stared at the frenzied girl with haughty contempt, and let it be understood, without words, that they no longer considered themselves acquainted with her.

M. Picard was not idle. He, too, hailed the boats, and particularly Lapeyrère, but with no more success. But he was not finished. The yawl, under M. de Chasteluz, next came within earshot, and he shouted to the engineer, imploring him to take off his family.

"For the love of God, monsieur—let my wife and children come down into your boat! You cannot leave them here, to be drowned, or massacred by these drunken brutes . . ."

De Chasteluz signified a curt refusal.

"Then at least take us off to M. Lapeyrere's pinnace, monsieur! We have been allotted positions in her—he cannot refuse to receive us!"

It was useless. The yawl by now, however, was close under the frigate's side, in the grip of the current that set out to sea. Picard, driven to desperation, snatched up a firelock from the deck and aimed down upon de Chasteluz.

"Come alongside immediately, sir!" he screamed. "Or I will blow your brains out! All of you—come alongside, I say!"

Moment of panic, of hesitation, under the threat of the wavering muzzle.

The barrel swung, pointing briefly at each of her crew in turn. No further hesitation now. The yawl slipped in alongside.

Picard was not to be outwitted. He beckoned his wife and family over, and, keeping a sharp eye on the men below, also covered the retreat, so that he could drive back any men who attempted to push the ladies aside and rush the gangway.

Then, fuming still, very hot and red and dignified, he followed, and stepping on board the yawl took his seat with a quiet: "Thank you, monsieur!" He and his family were saved—for the present.

By this time the raft had drifted some distance away, and all the boats were lying off near by, after helping in the embarkation of the soldiers. Schmaltz and de Chaumareys were still on board the *Medusa*, but had taken the precaution of making themselves inconspicuous, and suddenly a terrible cry went up from the crowd still on her decks.

"We are abandoned! They are deserting us!"

For a moment, it looked as if this were the case.

There were about sixty men on the wreck, among them a number of sailors who had been too occupied gorging themselves with wine, or plundering the baggage, to heed orders and attempt to escape. Already several were roaring drunk and almost all had fortified themselves to some extent, and were in a condition to believe anything.

A howl of rage followed the cry and men ran, staggering, for the muskets that had been stacked on deck. They snatched them up, began loading and rushing to the side to fire upon the boats.

"Pigs! Swine! Deserting us—all right—you'll die before *us*!"

Brédif, the mining engineer, had remained on board, his common sense telling him that it was suicide to go on the raft. He ran forward, shouting to the demented men, knocking up musket barrels, expostulating.

"You fools! We're not abandoned! They're coming back for us—the captain is still on board. Have you gone mad?"

One soldier, crazed with drink, threw him off and levelled his piece. Brédif leapt on him, snatched at the barrel, and for a half-minute a fierce struggle for possession took place. It successfully diverted the attention of the others, and kept them from firing upon the boats. They formed an informal ring to see what would happen, cheering on now the soldier, now Brédif.

Brédif was desperate, knowing how much depended upon quick victory. Once let these fellows start firing and a general massacre would follow. The contagion would spread like wildfire.

With a terrific wrench he gained possession of the weapon, and pitched it into the sea. Then he rounded on the others and, before they could muster their wits, he had disarmed them, single-handed, and jettisoned their muskets. For the moment the situation was saved.

The barge returned toward the bows of the wreck, and tied up. Colonel Schmaltz appeared with his servants and suite in their best uniforms. An armchair was brought up, slung on a davit, and the governor, with a dignity befitting his high station, took his seat.

Majestically, the armchair was swung off the deck and lowered into the sternsheets of the barge—an impressive ceremonial which showed that, however deplorable the lack of discipline might be in the navy, a Colonial governor still knew how to behave with dignity and calm. The mob stared, spellbound, at this astounding sight.

His officers followed, taking their places around the armchair on which he sat enthroned, for the gubernatorial bottom could not be expected to rest upon the hard, uncomfortable wood of a barge's thwart. Slowly, decorously, the barge pulled away from the wreck, towards where the two other boats and the yawl, none of them heavily laden, were standing off, awaiting the final moment.

De Chaumareys was in a quandary.

He had remained on board up till now because no other course had been open to him. Since the ship was to be abandoned, it was obvious that he must perform his last duty and leave her only when no other living soul remained. There was no danger in that. The sea had gone down, the clouds had dispersed, and the morning was now calm and fine, with the promise of an excellent, clear day. The frigate, badly battered as she was, had held together and was in no danger so long as the calm weather persisted. Besides, Midshipman Rang was keeping the boat well off, and had succeeded in preventing more than the agreed number of men from getting on board.

Now all was ready for the captain's departure—and an unforeseen difficulty presented itself. The entire ship's company should, according to plan, have been embarked; but there were still sixty people, including a few officers, who had point-blank refused to trust themselves to the raft. Was he to abandon them to their fate?

De Chaumareys confronted the problem. He tried to think, tried to reach a decision. But he was out of the habit. He could not make up his mind—Richefort, who might have helped him, had long ago gone down into the boat; and what he finally did was dictated by urgency, by indecision and by a troubled consciousness of the enormity of his behaviour.

He crawled through a forward rigging-port and lowered himself down, unobtrusively, into the sternsheets of the boat, which Rang had brought alongside. The manœuvre did not pass unobserved.

As he settled on his seat, a howl of execration rose from the doomed men. They came swarming to the side, spitting, cat-calling, screaming their curses down at him. It was lucky that Brédif had got rid of the firearms in time.

De Chaumareys forced himself to face them. He raised his hand and, for a moment there was silence, so that he could speak.

"It is clearly understood," he cried, "that of your own free will and in front of witnesses you refuse to evacuate the ship?"

Pierre Gorret, the fifty-year-old quartermaster, shook his fist at him, and shouted in a furious voice:

"I declare before witnesses that the ship could be refloated if we sacrificed the guns and cargo and, that in the condition she is in her commander has no right to abandon her!"

Then, seizing a musket that had been overlooked in the general scuffle, he took aim. Brédif, thrusting his way through the crowd, struck up the barrel in time and the shot went wide; then, helped by young d'Anglas, the arm subaltern who had deserted the raft, he disarmed the infuriated quartermaster.

De Chaumareys, who had had no time to become terrified, since the incident had taken place so quickly and at a little distance, scarcely appreciated the narrowness of his escape. He was, at the moment, in the grip of tradition. His face working with emotion, he stood up rigidly and saluted the frigate in farewell.

Another howl of execration from the wretches on board greeted this gesture, robbing it of its dignity, its pathos and its impressiveness. De Chaumareys sat down again, about to give the order to move off.

"They are mad!" he exclaimed, bitterly chagrined. "Insane! They are only staying on the ship because they have gone crazy for plunder. They want to pillage her . . ."

He looked once more at the frigate, at the white flag of the Bourbons that drooped above her, at her tangled rigging and battered bulwarks and broken rails; then, his voice almost drowned by the shrieks and curses of the sixty abandoned men, he gave the order to get under way.

It was then precisely seven a.m.

The moment for departure seemed to have arrived. But once more de Chaumareys hesitated; once more he was unable to act decisively. Smarting under the insults that had been heaped upon him, determined somehow to achieve the correct gesture, he could not bring himself to leave the frigate thus, with those curses still ringing in his ears.

He ordered Rang to close with the sloop, and called to Espiaux.

"Monsieur, you will proceed to the frigate and take off all those who have, contrary to my orders, remained on board."

Espiaux stared at him in amazement. The sloop was already well laden, and she leaked badly in spite of having been recaulked.

De Chaumareys' command seemed to invite the lieutenant to commit a peculiarly unpleasant form of suicide. But he had no alternative. He acknowledged the order, and bore the sloop round, laboriously, heading for the frigate.

The rest of the flotilla watched; but the sloop was very inexpertly trimmed, her jurymasts and spars badly balanced, and she refused utterly to sail into the wind, making no headway whatever towards the wreck.

Espiaux signalled for assistance. De Chasteluz and young Maudet were nearest and responded, Maudet passing over a towrope, while the yawl carried a line from the sloop to the frigate and made it fast. Heaving on this, Espiaux's crew was able to come alongside. And the lieutenant swarmed up on to the poop.

He called down to some of his men to come aboard and tranship at least a portion of the neglected provisions, and while three hundred and twenty rations of biscuit and a small beaker of water were being lowered over, he spoke to Brédif and d'Anglas.

"For God's sake, gentlemen—cannot we get these people to leave the ship?"

Brédif shrugged.

"What use?"

"But why? What are they afraid of?"

The engineer laughed shortly

"Afraid of? Look for yourself. Look at that thing, that atrocity they want us to embark on! Look at it! It is half under water. It is overloaded already. At the first breath of wind it will capsize, it will break up. And as for this fable about towing it . . ."

Espiaux pleaded, hotly. He was growing desperate. At last Brédif showed signs of giving in.

"It is understood that no one will be put on to the raft?"

"Of course! I give you my word, messieurs!"

(*please turn over*)

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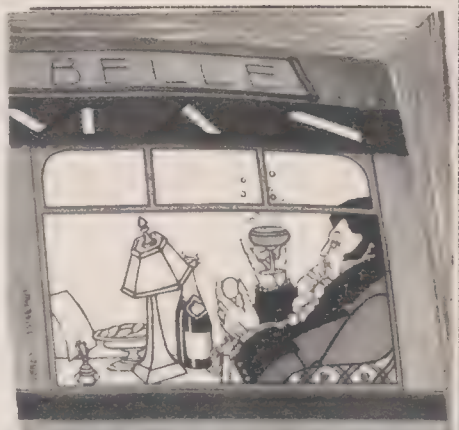

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Brédif and d'Anglas acquiesced at length; and forty or so of the others were prepared to accept the assurances offered them and to follow Brédif and the lieutenant. They clambered down into the sloop, followed by two women and a child. They were crammed together, without breathing space, packed like herrings in a barrel, and the sloop was laden down to her gunwales; but there were still seventeen men on board.

Espiaux sought them out. Crazed and besotted with drink and terror, they dodged him, hiding wherever they could, and he was unable to fetch any of them out on deck. Nothing—no reasoning, no cajolery, no threats—could induce them to leave the ship.

Considering that his duty was done and that any longer delay would be inexcusable, Espiaux gave up the hopeless attempt, and hoisted the white Bourbon flag to the masthead; then he clambered gingerly down into the sloop and ordered her to cast off. He had to con her carefully as she struggled away from the wreck and laboured towards the other boats, with eighty-eight people crammed into her.

As they came up, Espiaux shouted to de Chasteluz to lie-to and take off some of his surplus passengers; but the engineer paid no attention. Light, manageable, and with a minimum load, the yawl was forging rapidly ahead to lead the flotilla.

Espiaux tried the others in succession. All turned a conveniently deaf ear. He was left struggling along in their wake, with such a boatload that the slightest movement, the slightest ripple on the sea, slopped water over her gunwale. One could only pray that the calm would continue.

The captain's boat and the smallboat fetched their wind and held over to assist in the towing, at which already the barge and Lapeyrère's longboat were engaged; but they were none of them disposed to relieve the sloop of any of her passengers.

Nevertheless, the remarkable convoy, the credit for which belonged to the lively imagination of the governor, who had conceived so brilliant a method of consummating the voyage, was under way and everybody, with the exception of the seventeen recalcitrants still on board the wreck, was safe.

By the time the boats were ready to fall into line, the frigate was remote. A strong offshore current had taken hold of the flotilla, which, at the start of the voyage, found itself no less than four and a half miles out to sea from the wreck. It was a disheartening position.

For some time, only the governor's boat had been towing, and the men were already growing exhausted. Again and again an army officer, seeing what was happening, seeing how impossible it was to prevent the tow from making leeway with the current, kept urging the governor to consider himself and his companions in the barge.

Schmaltz, beginning now to perceive that there were difficulties, unsuspected by a landsman, in this wonderful idea of his, whose simplicity had appealed so irresistibly to the military mind, said nothing. There was nothing he could say. The raft had been his suggestion, made with the utmost confidence and assurance. Was he to acknowledge already that he had been mistaken; that his ignorance had led them into a fatal blunder?

Once Maudet and de Chaumareys had taken their places in the chain, hope revived. Efforts were redoubled and, for a while, the men bent their backs to the job with every ounce of their strength, straining at the oars, panting and grunting and sweating as the day grew hotter.

Then there was a sudden check. The arrival of the sloop, joining the convoy, and clamouring for assistance, created a mild disturbance. She was, indeed, in dire need of relief, for, wallowing and labouring heavily, she was almost out of hand. Young Maudet, watching her with anxious eyes as she came up, saw that Espiaux was in difficulties and unable to keep her steady on her course—and she was headed directly across the smallboat's bows.

Maudet, who at thirty-two was not only a competent officer, but sufficiently quick-witted and resourceful, took in the situation at a glance. His boat was in no condition to withstand the shock of a collision with so heavy a craft as the sloop. Yet the sloop was almost upon him.

Hampered by the towrope he could not escape, he could not alter course quickly enough to avoid a collision. He did the only thing possible. He cast off the cable and pulled out of line, just in time as the sloop lumbered past.

Now that the danger was past, Maudet prepared to resume his place in the chain. He hailed the captain's boat, which, of course, had been set adrift from the tow when he cast off.

"Shall we pick up our towline again, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, my dear fellow," de Chaumareys replied promptly. "Let us return immediately to our posts."

As they put about to stand over and take up their positions again, they saw to their astonishment that in the general excitement the line from Lapeyrère's boat to the barge had been cast off. Not only that, but also the barge herself was no longer attached to the raft, but, under sail and with oars plying furiously, was leaping away from the wretched contraption upon which a hundred and forty-seven men huddled in terror, staring with uncomprehending, vacant eyes at the manœuvres of the boats.

A voice shouted from the barge:

"The towrope has parted. We're abandoning them!"

Espiaux, on the labouring sloop, had observed this with amazement and a growing horror. Now he acted on his own responsibility. He threw over the tiller, brought the sloop round, and headed back for the raft.

The move produced a shout of consternation. Several of the sailors near him got to their feet and flung themselves on him, pinning him back in his seat.

"What are you up to?" they demanded, furiously. "Do you want us all to get drowned? If we go near the raft, they'll fling themselves on us—we'll be swamped!"

Espiaux did not struggle. He spoke quietly.

"I know that. I'm not mad. Do you think I'm going to run any risks? Can't you trust me?"

"No fear of that! It's every man for himself, understand? We are not going to stand for any tricks."

Espiaux, breathing heavily, kept his temper in hand. He saw that he was helpless, that if he attempted to struggle he would be overpowered in a moment. But he had never been weak, he had always exacted ungrudging respect from his men, and he relied now upon his authority still vested in him.

"Very well. Get back to your places. I am going to approach the raft, and keep within reach of her until the danger is past."

He spoke firmly, with quiet decision. The men hesitated, showed signs of recovering their discipline. There were several petty officers on board, who might respond if the lieutenant summoned them to his aid.

Espiaux pressed his advantage.

"We shall stand by until we are satisfied that they are safe. But if the other boats don't come back, there's nothing we can do. I can't undertake the impossible. You have my word."

They quietened down, waiting, watching the other boats

It did not take long to see what was happening. De Chaumarey's boat, well in the lead, was rowing steadily away; behind her Maudet followed, perhaps realising the futility of a single-handed attempt to tow the raft, perhaps unwilling to lose sight of his commanding officer. Lapeyrère and the Governor were making excellent speed just astern of them. Already the raft was some distance off.

Espiaux was amazed. He watched the boats pulling frantically away, looked back at the crowded raft, from which arose a wail of terror and despair as her people, waist-deep, clung to each other; looked along the length of his own boat, crammed far beyond capacity.

A group of petty officers, quick to take in the situation, seized the soldiers' firearms.

"Come on, lads! Shoot the swine! They're deserting—they're getting away! Kill them! Down with them!"

Espiaux shouted above the babel of curses hurled after the fugitives and deserters.

"For God's sake—quiet, men! We can do nothing. We are helpless. Let the swine go! What's the good of shooting? Shooting won't help us. Put down those muskets!"

No shot was fired. The men, undecided, lacking a leader of their own, lacking the necessary incentive, lowered their arms, one after another. No good shooting. . . . Espiaux made a gesture of despair with both hands.

"Set the foresail," he ordered, in a resigned, hopeless voice. The sail had been brailed up to keep the sloop from making too much way. The canvas spread, drawing well to the following wind, and the sloop's head came round for the coast of Africa.

The raft drifted, abandoned, just six miles from the frigate, which remained firmly on the bank, mute testimony to the fatal indecision, the presumption, the incompetence of a commander who was entirely without the experience to command, without the habit of authority, and without the strength of mind to acknowledge his deficiencies and consult the wider experience of his officers.

NEXT WEEK:
Adrift on the Raft

OLD BILL AND BERT

By BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

PLAYING WITH SAFETY

Here are a few of the gadgets that protect hands and fingers in the best equipped factories

BY D. M. B. COLLIER

RECENT inquiries into the old problems of making factory work safer, show that the main trouble to be fought by the inventors is the apathy of workers to safety gadgets. And it has now been decided that the really safe factory is that which guards the workers against themselves.

Home Office regulations stipulate a certain class of safety measure, but workers seem to dislike any device that hampers their speed. On piece work, for instance, this means monetary loss. And men and women object to the feeling that they are obliged to remember to adjust a device before they can perform a certain operation.

Monotonous occupations are still frequently the cause, not only of nervous breakdown, but also of accident. For the worker who performs the same task day after day, is apt to get careless and let things slide. That is why many factory managers make safety first demands a good deal stricter than they are obliged by Act of Parliament.

Workers filling bottles or siphons with aerated waters of any kind, are obliged to wear guards to protect their faces, because there is always the chance of a faulty bottle bursting. Girls employed throughout the aerated water section of a factory at Vauxhall, London, wear guards all the time they are at work. In fact, they are not allowed to enter that part of the building until their guards are adjusted and they have put on knee boots with clog soles to protect feet and stockings.

From experience it has been found that if girls had to readjust guards each time they began filling, they would try to evade the order—even with constant supervision.

It is doubtful whether any safety device can be absolutely foolproof. Here, for instance, is a case reported by a factory inspector. A heavy pressing machine for laundries is so designed, that after the shirt or garment to be pressed has been drawn over the mould, the heavy, steel pressing lid can only be lowered by pressing two buttons each placed in a lever on either side. This ensures that the operator, having to use both hands, cannot get one of them crushed.

One girl, however, discovered that she could lower the lid by pressing one button with her hand and raising her knee to press the other, thus leaving one hand free with which she wished to give the garment a final smooth over, as the lid was descending. She performed this feat once too often and her hand was terribly crushed.

Similarly, we have all met the window cleaner who will not wear his safety belt. He complains that it hampers his movements, and boasts that he has never had an accident. Yet more than fifty men are killed while cleaning windows in London each year. But there are two sides to this. Unlike the factory worker, who finds devices provided just where they are needed, the window cleaner seldom finds the necessary hooks in the window frames.

Speeding up often proves a menace to safety and, quite naturally, piece workers are frequently injured. Girls were seen putting on the final polish in a collar factory with machines from which the guards had been removed. One slip and the ends of their fingers would have been sliced right off. "Where are their guards," asked a horrified visitor.

"The girls don't like them," was the reply.

"But what about the factory inspector?"

"Oh, that is all right, there is always someone stationed downstairs to give the warning."

Similar examples of this occur in sweet cutting machines, where loose and therefore useless guards give increased speed. The only remedy seems to be higher pay for piece workers and punishment for those who continue to expose themselves to unnecessary danger.

Laundry work, largely carried out by girls, provides an excellent example of the combination of safety and sense, for even Factory Acts may overlook obvious points.

All hydro extractors—those giant cylinders in which clothes are placed and revolved at tremendous speed—must be covered, but there is no provision that lids should be fastened down. But in one London laundry which handles, among other things, 40,000 shirts a week and 70,000 collars, the hydro extractors are designed so that the lid cannot in any way be raised while the machine is in action.

On rollers for pressing sheets, towels and so on, there are guards coming half over the roller, so that a girl who happens to let a piece slip in crumpled or not straight, has to wait until a complete revolution of the roller has taken place.

According to law, there must be a glass screen between men working a circular saw on metal and the metal. In the heat of the works, with condensation of breath and so on, the glass becomes dimmed and slows up work. So it is quite common for men to remove the glass guards, risking terrible injuries.

Dermatitis is dreaded by every bakehouse worker, yet it would be easy to remove one of the main causes. Bakers have only to hang clean towels from the ceilings or convenient spots.

When a man's hands are covered with dough, and there is nothing to wipe them on close at hand, he picks up a sack, which is, of course, terribly rough to skin that has become both tender and fine with the constant handling of flour. Skin in this state is easily broken, sacks are not always clean—and so the trouble begins which may finish the worker's career in the bakehouse for ever.

Germs in the air may add to the danger in case of accident, so a well-known vacuum cleaner factory in London is sprayed night and morning with disinfectant vapour. Also, every machine is motored, doing away entirely with dangerous overhead belting and shafting.

When metal parts are issued from the press shop, they have to undergo a thorough cleansing from grease and metal particles by immersion in the vapour fumes of trichlorethylene.

By the old method, workmen stood breathing in the noxious fumes from the open vat, but now a machine enables workmen to feed baskets, containing the parts, at one end of an enclosed machine, and to take them away at the other end, perfectly clean and with no danger of fumes.

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VIRGINIA HALL'S PAGE

TO most of us, Whitsun is just "the next holiday after Easter," but to some people it seems to be a really important day. Mr. Coote Lake, secretary to the Folk-Lore Society, was telling me the other day about some of the quaint customs that still make Whitsun something more than a Bank Holiday in a few country places.

For instance, should you be passing through St. Briavel's, Gloucestershire, on Whit Sunday evening you may see, at the close of the evening service, pieces of bread and cheese being thrown from the walls of the parish church to the crowd below.

Years ago several baskets of bread and cheese, cut into small pieces, were carried into the church and after the service, churchwardens carried them to the gallery from which the bread and cheese were thrown among the congregation.

This custom was observed to preserve, for the poor of St. Briavel's, the right of cutting and carrying away wood from 3,000 acres of coppice land. And it is still observed, but nowadays outside the church.

Then there's cheese-rolling, an old custom kept up on Whit Monday, at Cooper's Hill, near Birdlip, on high ground, which is a grazing common. Again the ceremony is performed to maintain rights of the common.

Two or three cheeses are rolled down the hill and youths from surrounding parishes dash away after them, for anybody who can capture a cheese may carry it home. Most of the boys come croppers and roll down the hill as fast as the cheeses.

There are all sorts of sayings and superstitions still believed by English country folk. You must, for instance, wear something new on Whit Sunday if you want to be lucky, and you mustn't cut your nails on Whit Monday for this brings bad luck. An old belief, probably extinct now, was that a child born on Whit Sunday was doomed either to kill or be killed.

They believe in Huntingdonshire that the weather on Whit Sunday is always the opposite of that of Holy Thursday; a fair Whit Sunday also foretells a bountiful harvest. And if it rains on Whit Sunday there will be thunder and lightning.

Gooseberries usually make their appearance around Whitsuntide, so here is a recipe for Gooseberry Wine. To 4 lb. gooseberries allow 4 quarts of cold water, and to 1 gallon juice allow 3 lbs. preserving sugar, from 1 to 2 gills of gin, and a little isinglass.

Gather gooseberries in dry weather and before they are quite ripe. Top and tail them, then wash and drain. Put them into a tub, bruise them well, and pour the cold water over them. Cover and stand for three or four days, stirring occasionally. Then strain through a jelly-bag or fine sieve, measure the liquid, and add 3 lbs. preserving sugar to each gallon of juice.

When this has dissolved, pour all into a clean barrel. Cover the bung-hole lightly and, when fermentation has ceased, add the gin and a little isinglass, which will help to clear the wine. Close the bung-hole and leave for six months. The wine may then be bottled, but should be kept for some months until the sweetness has gone off, before drinking.

Most women these days have become vitamin-conscious as far as their health and their "tummies" are concerned. Although having a care about the vitamins in our food certainly has a good effect, the vitamin element should not stop at our "eats." It should go farther than that.

And you can now buy face-creams containing "skin-vitamin." Although this make of cream has been famous for more than fifty years, the additional advantage is something new.

It rebuilds tissues, keeps the skin soft, smooth and youthful, and is essential for the preservation of the normal structure and functioning of the skin. So more than ever before, these two creams can help you to beautify and improve your skin.

Medical science has played a big part in improving this cream. Four years ago scientists discovered that when an ointment containing a certain vitamin was applied to burns and wounds the skin healed extraordinarily quickly and smoothly.

They knew, too, that many harsh skin conditions develop through lack of this same vitamin, which is not contained in adequate amounts in most people's diets. Moreover, the vitamin, which *is* received through certain foods, is too often used up by the body before it has time to reach the skin, and the little amount the skin does receive is usually dried out by exposure to air and water.

The result is that most skins suffer,

MODEL BY "MATITA"

oil glands dry up and the under-tissues become shrunken. So some of the leading chemists experimented to see what this vitamin would do to the skin if it were added to face creams.

Experiments lasting three years proved that when these creams containing the skin-vitamin were applied, daily, to the skin, it became altogether smoother, fresher in colour, clearer, healthier and more youthful. The microscope showed that oil glands were functioning again, that flattened cells were rounded out and that shrunken under-tissues were restored to normal.

Women were given the creams to try and, after using them for two to three weeks, all confirmed their new beauty-giving properties. This skin-vitamin should not be confused with others. It isn't Vitamin B, or the sunshine vitamin, the orange juice vitamin, or Vitamin F. It is the vitamin responsible for rebuilding skin tissues—Vitamin A.

All this may be rather technical, but I want you to understand what an added reason there is for you to try an already famous cream, for this Vitamin A is now contained in every jar and tube of this particular make. If you want more particulars, please write to me, marking your envelope "Skin-Vitamin," and I shall be pleased to let you have them.

"What shall I take away with me?" is a very common question when the holiday season is starting. And what is really meant is "How can I make the most of the clothes I *do* take?" For we all like to travel as light as we can.

Personally, I always think it's well worth having *two* suits. Imagine, for a moment, that last year you had a white linen suit, or a dusky pink. This year I would advise you to buy navy blue. By so doing you really have four suits, for you can interchange the coats and skirts of the two suits and at the moment it's very fashionable to have odd skirts and jackets. The same accessories go with all four outfits.

To get the most out of your tweed suit and the one you intend buying, choose a plain material in a colour matching a fleck or check of the tweed so that again you can swop the two around.

The same goes for cotton or silk summer dresses with little matching coats. Last year you had a plain green dress with a little fitting jacket to wear over it. Well, obviously green must suit you, or you wouldn't have chosen it, so what better could you choose this year than a patterned frock, with, say, a matching bolero, but with the main colour the same as your green frock of last year?

If you practise little tricks like this, you'll find that your wardrobe will appear far larger than it really is, and you'll be able to dispense with the services of railway porters.

June always makes me think of roses and one of my pet grouses, which is that people who grow roses in their gardens are often stingy with them. Roses look lovely in vases, and apart from that they *should* be cut.

So if you have roses in your garden, be generous with them, for remember, the more you cut the more you will have. Cut the blooms well down, which will make for better flowers in the second crop.

This month there is quite a lot of cutting to be done in the garden. Flowers such as lupins, delphiniums, anchusa, should all be cut down as soon as the flowers fade. But although the flowers have gone, don't forget the roots. These should be manured and watered from time to time.

If you are interested in any of the things mentioned in this page, please write to Virginia Hall, c/o "The Passing Show," 92 Long Acre, W.C.2, for she is very willing to help in such matters

"I used to be a frump, Jane Seymour"

"I simply don't believe it!" I said to this client when she called at my Salon and told me that. "Your skin looks beautifully tended and your colour accent is just right."

"Well," she said, smiling. "Six months ago, I assure you, I was the sort of person nobody noticed. I didn't believe in beauty treatment. Then one day I read an advertisement of yours that inspired me. I began to look after my skin with Cleansing Cream, Juniper Skin Tonic, and Orange Skin Food, and learned to make-up every day with Petal Cream, Dryskin Powder, and a little touch of Paste Rouge and Lipstick.

"The result was that I became more interested in my appearance. I went in for smarter clothes. Because I felt gayer and more attractive myself, I became more attractive to other people. And well—I just want to thank you, that's all."

What a lot women miss in life by letting their looks go! A little care with a few well-planned preparations can bring out a whole personality. Why don't you try it? Get my book 'Speaking Frankly' from any shop that sells my preparations—and read it. Or get it direct from me: Jane Seymour Ltd. 21-22 Grosvenor Street, Bond Street, London, W.1. Telephone: Mayfair 3712, Salon Extension 3.

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BEAUTY PREPARATIONS

GRANDMA'S GHOST

Plotting sudden death and calling up spooks in a time-weathered castle is no occupation for a girl in love

BY STEPHEN PHILLIPS

SHE sat and watched the bright play of Grandma's knitting-needle. Grandma was a clever knitter, amazingly quick for her age. Freda's eyes were fixed on the old woman and the black, ill-shaped shadows behind her. Wroxborough Castle was full of such shadows. Even in the daytime. . . .

Freda stared past Grandma at the empty, shining suits of armour which stood about along the dark, oak-panelled walls. The gleam of the tall, white candles invested the figures with a kind of evil animation.

"What's that you're making, Grandma?" Freda asked, and now her eyes, hard and bright—and a little strange and unpleasant—had returned to the old woman's thin, almost emaciated frame.

"What do you think it is?" Grandma asked, with that thin, tight-lipped smile of hers. "A coat of mail for Sir Robert over there?"

Freda just stared at her in silence. Sometimes it was hard to keep the hate out of her eyes, her voice. "Cracked old hag," she thought, savagely. "If I could get away with it, I think I'd kill her."

"If you really want to know," Grandma said, with another grim and ghostly smile, "I'm knitting a pair of bed-socks."

"Bed-socks? Who—who for, Grandma?"

"For my own cold, old feet," said Grandma. Then she put down the knitting and looked fixedly at her grandchild. "You don't like the old castle, do you, Freda?"

"I—I hate it."

"Why?"

"It—it gives me the creeps. I—I feel as if I want to get up and *scream*. . . ."

"Well, why don't you, if you think it will do you any good?"

Freda bit at her lip. You couldn't expect sympathy—or understanding, even—from Grandma. She was just a shrivelled-up bag of bones. The eyes, sunk in her head, reminded Freda of the eyes of a mummy or something, looking out at you from a glass coffin.

"You *ought* to try to like the castle, Freda. After all, you know, you'll have to live in it after I'm gone."

"I—I keep seeing things," Freda said, fiercely.

"Seeing things? What *sort* of things?"

"Oh, I—I don't know. It's always so dark and creepy. Last night I couldn't sleep, because the wind was moaning in my bedroom like—like something *human*."

Grandma got out of the big, hard chair. She picked up her stick and stood there, leaning on it.

"So you're *scared*, are you?" There was biting contempt in the old woman's voice.

"Yes, I *am*," Freda admitted, passionately. "Who wouldn't be scared in this—this ghoulish old castle, anyhow?"

"Don't call it names, child. It's been my home for fifty years or more. It's never scared *me*."

Freda looked at her. That was probably quite true. The devil himself might have been hard put to it to scare Grandma.

"Besides," said Freda, "it's supposed to be haunted, isn't it?"

"Not *supposed*," said Grandma. "It *is* haunted."

She dined alone with Grandma, at the long table where so many Guises had feasted, and it seemed to her as if the empty chairs were peopled by ghosts. . .

"Why aren't you eating your rice-pudding?" Grandma demanded.

"It seems absurd," said Freda, "to be eating rice-pudding in a place like this. Besides, I—I'm not hungry."

"You so seldom are. I wouldn't let any ghost take away my appetite."

"G—ghost, Grandma?"

"That's what I said." Grandma helped herself to some more rice-pudding. "What's so odd about a ghost, anyway? There always have been ghosts. There always will be ghosts."

Freda just sat there, staring at her. She knew Grandma believed in such things. Anyone would have believed in them, in a place like Wroxborough Castle, up there on those steep, black cliffs, where the seas pounded and the gulls screamed their weird cries against the dark, rain-swept skies.

The castle had a bloody history, too. There had been terrible deeds done within those grim, old walls; things too awful to talk about. Grandma—her name, actually, was Emily de Guise—knew all about them. She was proud of the place; but, in her pride, there was, at times, something a little ghoulish. . . .

Wroxborough Castle had been handed down through each successive generation of the de Guise family. Grandma was the last of her line. Only Freda would be left to carry on the de Guise tradition.

And one of those traditions was that the last surviving member of the house of Guise should occupy the castle.

"You'd have liked it well enough," said Grandma, "if that young man of yours—what's his name, Anstruthers?—hadn't put a lot of nonsense into your head."

"You don't like him, do you, Grandma?"

Grandma paused, a spoonful of rice lifted to her mouth.

"*Like* him? I *detest* him. What virtues has he to recommend him? Or what *vices*, for that matter? All the de Guises had vices of some description. With most of them it was *women*." Grandma made the assertion almost as if the fact were one to be proud of. "They *were* men," she added, sourly. "This Claude Anstruthers of yours—bah! Jackanapes. Puppy. Imbecile. He's got hot air where his brains ought to be. And you're going to marry him. I suppose you *are*?"

"Yes," said Freda, with sudden, strange defiance, "I *am*. Whether you like it or not, Grandma."

"I most certainly do *not* like it."

"I'm sorry," said Freda, and rose from the table.

"Where are you going?"

"To bed, Grandma. I—I've an awful head."

"A well-whiskered excuse, child. I wanted to talk to you." A queer, almost pleading light came into her eyes. "You know how I feel about this matter, child. Tradition is a great thing, even at the present day. I'm a de Guise, child, and so are you. I want to live long enough to see you and your husband installed here as master and mistress of Wroxborough Castle. Then I can die content."

"I—I don't think Claude would ever live in the castle," Freda said. "He can't stand the place at any price."

Grandma's eyes grew glassily bright.

"So I *am* right," she said. "It *is* Anstruthers. . . . Very well, child, you can go to your bed."

Going up that dark, broad staircase, her shadow seemed to follow her, gliding on the wall, past the silent, armoured forms. The candlelight, its gleam flickering an instant on a Norman battle-axe, made the rusty steel shine so brightly that Freda started suddenly aside from it, with a frightened gasp.

She paused a moment at the long window, where once the archers of Sir Montgomery de Guise had stood to shoot their arrows at the Saxon swine. The moat, below, was dark and still and green. . . . A pallid moon shone on the still water. The clouds were scudding seawards and the gulls screamed their eerie cries across the wild, lonely marshland.

She crossed the wide landing, passed through the gloom of it, heavy with its terrible history. Her bedroom door swung open with a creaking of unoiled, old-fashioned hinges. She shut the door and put the candle down. She undressed and got into bed, leaving the candle burning near the window.

For a long time, with wide-open eyes, she lay there, thinking. She wasn't quite so scared as she pretended; nevertheless, she *did* hate Wroxborough Castle. The mere thought of having to spend the rest of her days there appalled her. And what of Claude? He would most certainly jib at such a prospect. And she *was* fond of him. In fact, her fondness for him was a little surprising even to herself. . . .

She thought of the emaciated, grim-faced, old woman sitting alone, completely fearless, in the great, dark, baronial hall. Emily de Guise had made up her mind that her only surviving grandchild should take up her residence in the castle, according to the de Guise tradition. This tradition had become a mania with her. And if she refused? Well, Emily de Guise had the power to disinherit her and Claude; in that case the great de Guise fortune would probably go to charity.

A look came into Freda de Guise's eyes—a pale, unpleasant look, such as had been seen in the eyes of many a de Guise before her. And usually that look boded no good to friend or foe, or even to kith and kin. . . .

She must have dozed off after a time. She woke, suddenly—to see Emily de Guise standing at the foot of the bed, the faint gleam of the dying candle striking its weird light across her face, a bright Norman dagger in her hand.

Freda sat up with a gasp; her throat was suddenly dry.

"What—what do you want?"

Emily de Guise stared down at her. Freda was supple and lovely. She had the queer, almost colourless de Guise eyes. And yet she was so different from what a de Guise should have been that Emily hated her with a strong, stubborn, ruthless hatred.

"I was just going to put this dagger

(*please turn to page* 36)

Emily de Guise stared down at Freda, hating her with a strong, ruthless hatred. "I was just going to put this dagger back where it belongs," she said

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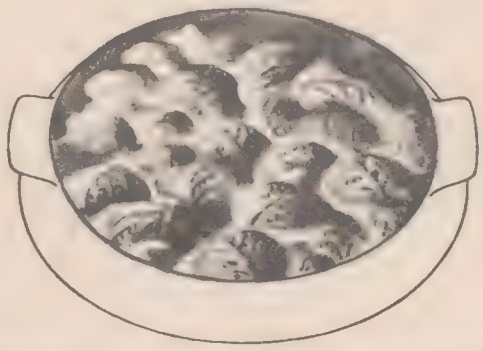

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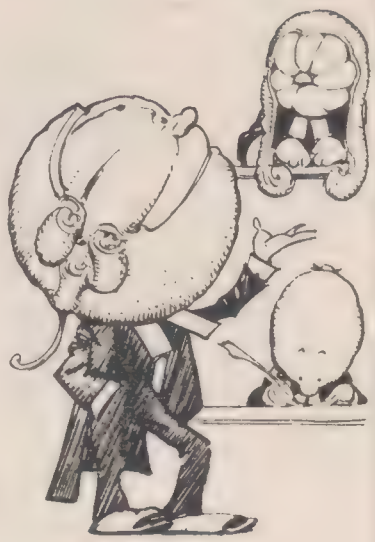

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back where it belongs," she said. "It's Sir Ronald's. He used it in his duel with the French Comte de Vignihuille. Sir Ronald killed him."

Freda lay back again. She kept her eyes fixed on Emily.

"I was passing your door, child, when I heard you cry out."

"Cry out?"

"I opened the door and looked in. *You were talking in your sleep*, child—the only de Guise I know of who ever did such a thing."

The afternoon had been almost a pleasant one. A cheery sun warmed the marshes, slanted on the grey castle walls. Grandma had ordered tea to be served on the wide stretch of green above the deep, gloomy dungeons, where many a faithless Saxon had been left to rot. . . .

Anstruthers looked at the castle, shining in the sun light.

"Looks almost jolly, what?" he laughed.

Grandma winced. She selected a cheese-and-tomato sandwich and looked at the rather vacuous young man. Anstruthers was certainly not in the de Guise tradition. He had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, although the silver had long since worn off. . . . All the de Guises—the males, at any rate—had been workers and fighters. Anstruthers was neither of these things. He was a "play boy," rising with the stars and sleeping with the dawn.

He rather horrified Grandma.

"I suppose," she remarked, acidly, "if you had your way, young man, you'd *sell* Wroxborough Castle?"

"Oh, quite," Anstruthers laughed, "quite."

Grandma's glassy eyes looked him through and through He wriggled. Her fixed stare gave him the impression of steel blades being passed through his body.

"To—to some jolly old American millionaire, what?" he said, and wiped hurriedly at his brow, with his handkerchief.

"Yes," said Grandma, reaching for another sandwich, "to some jolly old American millionaire. . . ."

Suddenly her gaze switched to Freda, and the slanting rays of the sun seemed to put a kind of fire into Grandma's eyes. Freda, no doubt, would prefer one of those modern, self-contained flats, "with every modern convenience," to the dark, ageless glories of the ancient home of the de Guises.

It was Freda, rushing screaming down the broad staircase one evening, who started the rumour that the ghost of Sir Anthony the Strong was abroad once more within the precincts of the castle.

"What on earth is it, child?" Grandma asked, irritably. "What frightened you?"

"I—I saw *something*," Freda gasped.

"Well, suppose you *did*?"

Freda stared with glassy eyes of fear.

"Or I—I *thought* I saw something," she added.

"Sir Anthony wouldn't hurt you, child."

Freda only shivered.

"He was one of the most chivalrous of all the de Guises," said Grandma. "In any case, what could be more harmless than a poor, wandering spirit?"

"Perhaps it—it's just *nerves*?" Freda suggested, more calmly. "My nerves are in a simply shocking state. If—if only I could rid myself of this—this *obsession* about ghosts and things. . . ."

"That Anstruthers puppy," Grandma said, tight-lipped, "and his jolly old American millionaires. . . . You're a de Guise. *Nothing* should frighten you, least of all a poor, restless ghost. I suppose Claude wants you to leave the castle?"

"I—I don't know," Freda said, miserably.

"Well, let him try and persuade you at his peril," Grandma said.

"Why do you blame Claude for—everything?"

"Because the blame *is* his. If you'd never met him, you'd have been content to take up your life here, with me."

"*Should* I?"

"Of course you would. Even now, if I had Aladdin's Lamp and could make him disappear." . . .

Freda laughed nervously.

"You talk so oddly at times."

"*Do* I? What were you trying to tell me just now, child?"

Freda hesitated, flushing nervously.

"Grandma, it may sound perfectly ridiculous to you, but. . . ."

"Yes, yes, get on with it, child."

"Very well. I—I was just *thinking*, you see, if—if someone were to *play* the ghost and—and try to frighten me . . ."

Grandma put down her knitting.

"What on earth are you talking about?" she demanded.

"I—I *might* get over it," Freda went on, almost desperately. "After all, it may be just *imagination*. If it is—well, don't you see, Grandma? Suppose *you* were to play the ghost . . ."

"*I*?" Grandma sat bolt upright.

"Y—yes. I know it sounds absurd, but—suppose you put on that old uniform of Sir Anthony's and came into my room one night, pretending to be the ghost. The shock might do me good. I—I'd be able to laugh at myself afterwards. And—and whenever I started imagining things again, I'd just say to myself, 'Why, you little idiot, *it's only Grandma pretending*. . . ."

"I never," Grandma said, "heard anything quite so ridiculous in my life."

But when Freda de Guise had gone, and the ancient shadows came and regrouped themselves about Emily deGuise's chair, a peculiar light came into her eyes.

"Freda de Guise," she said to the grim old shadows, "you're a far cleverer young woman than I thought. But then all the de Guises have been clever, even the *women*."

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NEXT WEEK

"Promise you won't breathe a word to anyone," Freda pleaded. "I—I'd look a first-class little fool."

"I promise," said Grandma.

"Not—not even to Claude?"

"Not even to Claude, child."

Freda smiled gratefully.

"I—I don't know whatever made me suggest such a silly thing," she said.

"I'm not so sure," said Grandma, "that it *is* so silly, after all."

Freda stared.

"Why, Grandma, whatever do you mean by that?"

Grandma smiled, a little grimly.

"Nerves, child, are funny things. If I thought it would help you, perhaps even *cure* you of your fears. . . ." She nodded her head slowly. "Well, perhaps I'll come and haunt you to-night. Better look out for me."

Freda laughed at anything so absurd, and Grandma, taking up her stick, went across the broad hall-way, through the pale, shining candlelight. She sat herself down in the porch and gazed through the window over the wild, desolate marshland. A clock began to chime and as the last notes died, she heard Freda come to the foot of the great staircase.

"Going to bed, child?"

"Yes, Grandma. Goodnight."

"Goodnight, child."

For some time, motionless, with fixed eyes, Grandma sat there. Then she went back across the hall to the 'phone.

"Is that you, Mr. Anstruthers? I'm rather worried about Freda. She's not at all well. I wonder if you could come over?"

"Now?"

"Yes," said Grandma, "*now*."

She replaced the instrument, stood an instant listening. Charles, the butler, came into the hall. He looked at old Emily de Guise standing there in the gloom, an almost invisible form.

"Will you be requiring anything more to-night, madam?"

"No, Charles. You may retire."

"Thank you, madam."

"Oh, and Charles . . ."

"Yes, madam?"

"Are all the other servants in bed?"

"All of them, madam."

Charles went on up that broad staircase.

The castle grew quiet.

Freda lay *listening* to the quietness of it. Her eyes were watching the bedroom door, and her hand, under the coverlet, held a small revolver.

The eyes of Freda de Guise were bright and hard. Presently Grandma would open that door—and then she would shoot her dead. It would all appear so obvious on the face of it. Grandma's mania was well known. She had always insisted that Wroxborough Castle was haunted, as all good castles should be. To have anyone doubt such a fact would throw her into the most insane fury. It would be quite clear, then, that Grandma had decided to haunt the castle herself—in an attempt to sustain the castle's eerie reputation.

And if the silly old creature got shot while playing such a fantastic prank—well who could blame Freda de Guise for what happened?

How was she to know that it was only Grandma—*pretending*?

The castle door was open when Anstruthers came hurrying out of the gloomy night. Grandma led him across the hall. Two candles burned murkily on the long table, across which Sir Anthony's moth-eaten clothes were thrown.

"I—I say," Anstruthers blurted, staring round, "I wouldn't have come to the jolly old castle, you know, for anything, at night, if you hadn't told me about Freda."

Grandma picked up the moth-eaten garments. He stared with bulging eyes.

"I say, aren't they the jolly old things Sir Anthony was supposed to have been wearing when . . ."

"They *are*. You needn't be so nervous, Claude. But I'm really very worried about Freda. I'm afraid for the poor child's *brain*."

"But I say, Grandma . . ."

"Don't call me Grandma. And *listen*. It's this ghost that's bothering her so much. The other evening she suggested I should dress up in Sir Anthony's clothes and play the ghost. She seemed to think it would help to drive the fear out of her mind, poor child."

"I say, though, good lord," Claude said.

"Well, I've decided to humour her," Grandma said, shrugging. "It may help. It may not. At least, one can try."

"Oh, quite, quite. But . . ."

"Only," said Grandma, picking up the things, "I'm afraid I shall look a little—well, *undersized*, in the things. Sir Anthony was a tall man, like *you*, Claude. Now, if *you* were to put on his clothes, with this helmet and vizor. . . . . Don't stare like a hooked fish, man. You'll be doing it for Freda, won't you? If you really care for her. . . . Here, put them on:"

"But . . ."

"For goodness' sake, *hurry*. And mind you don't go stumbling on the stairs and so spoil the illusion. . . ."

"Oh, well," said Claude, helplessly, "if you really think . . ."

"I *do*," she snapped. "Now, be quick."

She helped him put the helmet over his head, adjusted the vizor carefully.

"You won't need this chain mail," she said. "It *might* rattle."

She stood there, in the dim light, watching him go up the wide stairs.

Suddenly there was a shot; a startled, terrible scream. . . .

Emily de Guise went across the hall towards the staircase. *Tap, tap, tap*, her stick went. For one de Guise to plot the killing of another was indeed pitting Greek against Greek. *Besides, it was contrary to all tradition for a de Guise to talk in his—or, rather, her—sleep.*

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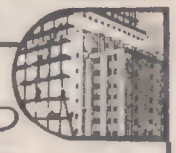

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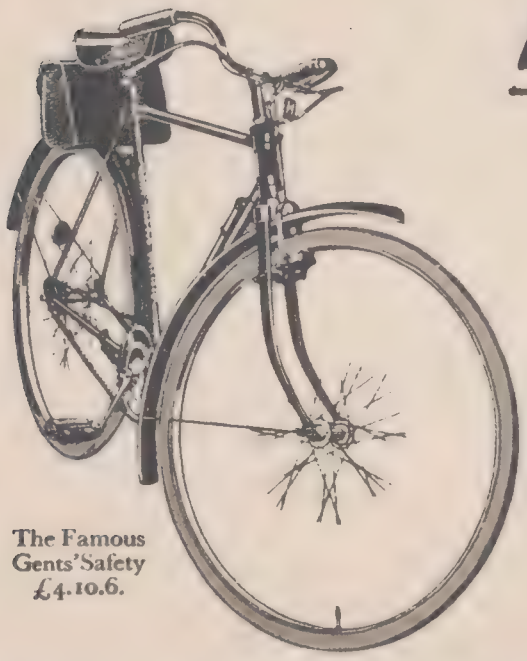

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BY ASHTON WOLFE

The Shadow as he really was

One of Frickner's cunning, artificial hands. The claws worked by springs from inside the leather cuff, which fitted over the wrist and hands

Frickner, the nightwatchman

FOR the love of Mike, what's wrong with the chief these days?" I asked, as my friend, Inspector Lange, sidled noiselessly into my room and perched himself on the edge of a table.

He sniffed at the question and began thoughtfully to stuff his pipe with the coarse shag he favoured. When it was well alight he answered slowly.

"He's worried about 'The Shadow.' The newspapers have been at us again. You know that spitefully sarcastic cliche they use:

"'*The police have a clue, as usual—and hope to make an arrest soon.*' The truth is *we have no clue*; it's uncanny!"

"The Shadow? It sounds very melodramatic. Who and what *is* the Shadow?"

Lange surrounded himself with a cloud of smoke. "If I could tell you *that, mein lieber*—we'd be on velvet. It's just what we don't know."

"Well, what's he done?" I insisted, sliding my dripping negatives into a drying rack and wiping my hands.

"What hasn't he done? You heard about the burglary at Von Bauendorff's place? Well—that was The Shadow's work. And the stolen plans of the Hauff torpedo? The Shadow again. Then quite recently the hold-up of the Cuban envoy; the Shadow—always the Shadow!"

"Humph—you've got the Shadow on the brain. You say no one has seen him—how'd he get his name?" I asked curiously, switching on the ventilator to clear the air and get a glimpse of Lange's face.

"The fellow uses something to put 'em to sleep that stinks like garlic. They found the night watchman at Hauff's laboratory unconscious on the floor, and the safe empty of all but this stink. When the man came round he told me that he remembered seeing an enormous black shadow on the wall and heard a peculiar hissing. That seems to prove it's a gas. He said that the moment he heard the hissing the walls and furniture began to dance the Rumba, and then—nothing. The shadow was that of a hunchback. But the hump he saw may have been the gasbag the fellow carried strapped to his back.

"At Von Bauendorff's it was the gardener who was put to sleep. He, too, stank of garlic when found and he also said he saw a vague, black smudge on the wall, which suddenly became the shadow of a hunchback with long ragged hair and clutching hands. The papers, naturally, made the most of the tale and at once dubbed this mysterious robber 'The Shadow.' I don't suppose the fellow works alone, of course. But it looks as though it's he puts them to sleep every time. He seems to prefer jewels but he also goes in for the plans of valuable inventions. You'd think we'd get on his track when he tries to sell the one or the other. But so far—pfuit!" and he puffed energetically. "Of course, we're getting it in the neck from the press and from the War Office. This Cuban was carrying documents relating to some state secret. I expect they'd fetch a big price if offered to an enemy."

"And you've no idea whatever who the fellow may be?"

Lange shrugged. "None."

I slept badly; my dreams of nothing but shadows that vanished when I tried to handcuff them. I was out in a storm apparently—the hail drummed on the roof of my car—louder and louder—until with a jerk I was wide awake to find the dream had become reality. I rolled out of bed as another gust of hail rattled on the window. But, to my surprise, the dawn was lemon yellow in a clear sky—and then I saw Paul Lange's upturned face in the street below.

"Hulloa, sleepy-head!" he called impatiently. "About time you woke up. The street door's shut; your 'phone won't work; and I've been chucking gravel at your window for ten minutes."

"But it's not seven yet," I remonstrated.

"Dress and come down. It's The Shadow again."

That drove the last remnant of sleep from my brain, and a cold shower fully revived me. As I tumbled into the car beside my friend he slipped into "top" with reckless haste.

"He's been operating at the Elberfeld Works out at Spandau, this time," he grunted, in answer to my jerky questions, while I tried vainly to light a cigarette.

"Jolly serious I'm afraid. They'd recently acquired the famous Schotte formula——"

"H.S.47, the new explosive?"

"That's it. I believe the military had arranged for a demonstration, but it was a jealously guarded secret.

"That formula seems to be a hoodoo. Heineman—the inventor was killed in an explosion; the firm who experimented for him had its premises burnt down—and now, this morning, a burglary. Here's a straight bit, hold tight!"

Speech became impossible. I could only do as he advised and hold tight. His burst of speed brought us to the gates of the E.W.S. just as our chief, Von Wilder, climbed out of his big Benz. In an office on the first floor the works manager, only half dressed, was bending over the limp form of his night watchman. A doctor was about to make an injection. As he lifted his patient's arm, Lange uttered an "Oh" of pity, *for the man had no hands*, In their place were two weird steel claws, like a crab's pincers, but with a flat surface inside the pincer points. The claws appeared to work by means of springs, their grip controlled by a slight bending of the wrists, his hands having been amputated so that the articulations remained. Broad metal and leather cuffs fitted closely over the forearms and were held in position by elastic thongs. The man was beginning to revive and I saw him nip and pull a handkerchief from his pocket and skilfully wipe his moist face. As he moved I caught a whiff of a most nauseating odour, resembling garlic.

A boot, a length of string, and a gasbag rendered Frickner unconscious without trace

Lange nudged me and whispered: "I told you so; that's The Shadow's particular perfume. Look at the chief's face."

Wilder had evidently smelled it, too, for I saw him recoil with a muttered curse. Turning to the manager:

"The doctor'll bring him round—I'll question him when he's thoroughly conscious. Meanwhile, suppose you tell me what's happened. Start with what you saw; I'll get the rest of the tale from the watchman. Who found him?"

"The other watchman."

"Then call him—where is he?"

The manager pressed a bell and a moment later a sturdy, bull-necked young man came into the room.

"This is Fritz—the man who patrols section B. He——"

Wilder held up his hand, "Now, Fritz; did you hear or see anything unusual since you came on duty?"

"*Nein, Herr Kommissar.*" The fellow clicked his heels in a military salute.

"I came on duty at 6.30. Frickner—the poor chap without any hands—took the first watch, while I had some grub in the canteen. He came to fetch me; pinchin' me lug as he always does, an' rollin' a fag with them lobster's nippers; he knows I like to watch 'im do it.

"But last night 'e couldn't get it right. He tore two papers in arf and then chucked me the baccy. I says—*t'aint usual for you to be so nervous Hans. Wot's up——?*"

"We don't want to know all that," the manager interrupted.

"Well—the Herr said 'anythin' unusual! That's the first time I seen Hans mess up a fag."

Wilder looked up from his notes with a smile.

"Quite right, Fritz. Go on."

(*please turn to page* 40)

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Mrs. L. G. writes from Rutherglen:

"I feel that it is my duty to write you re the great help 'ASPRO' has been to me. For five years I have suffered from a very bad form of neuritis and have had the most expensive medicines tried on me, but was never without pain. A friend advised me to try 'ASPRO'. I had no faith in it but I did try it and I find that it soothes the pain and by taking 2 tablets at bed-time I am sure of a good night's rest. This is a plain statement of facts."

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267 Northumberland Avenue,
Dear Sirs, Reading.

Just a few words of praise for 'ASPRO'. I had some teeth extracted and for three days I had untold agony through aching gums and someone suggested 'ASPRO' and the first two tablets gave instant relief.

I am, Yours truly,
V. WITHERS.

HEAD PAINS GO

Mrs. L. K. writes from Bishops Waltham: "I thought I would take the pleasure in writing to say that I think 'ASPRO' Tablets are wonderful things. Why I am writing this is because my husband has suffered a great deal in the head, so seeing these 'ASPRO' so much in the paper I got him some and he says he feels twice the man now."

MOVE A MUSCLE

6 Loudon Grove, Princes Park,
Dear Sirs, Liverpool, 8.

I feel I must write and thank you for the instant relief I have obtained from your 'ASPRO' tablets. I had a very heavy cold and such pains across my shoulders that I could hardly move a muscle in my body (let alone work). My wife got me 6d. of 'ASPRO' tablets. I took some of them and went to bed. And to my surprise the pain was greatly eased, the cold in the head gone. I took the remainder the next night and now I am back at work again.

So thanking you and wishing your goods a better and larger sale,
I am, Yours gratefully,
LEONARD WALKER.

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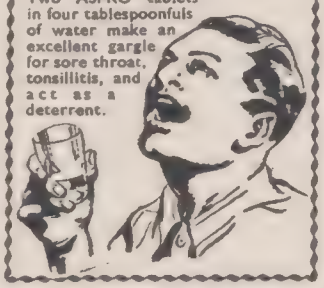

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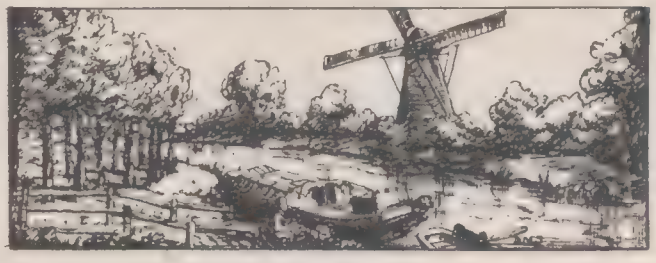

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Some phrases seldom ring true

"It gives me great pleasure"

but

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

"We met every two hours as agreed. Three o'clock was the larst time. When 'e didn't turn up at five I sounded me whistle. Gettin' no answer I starts goin' the rounds o' section A at the double. And in number four corridor I sees Frickner lying on the floor on his face, 'is arms outstretched. No—one arm out—t'other doubled under his 'ead, an' his whistle gripped in' is claw——"

"Left or right?" Lange interrupted.

"The left; and a narsty stink hangin' about him. 'E's been gassed I sez to myself—'an' put ter sleep. So I sounds the alarm. I touched nothing except to feel 'is 'eart an' make sure 'e's alive. Then the special guard starts 'ammering on the gate, an' I lets 'im in and locks it again——"

"Again—then it was locked before?"

"Sure it was—*an' bolted.* The special sends me to a telephone to the boss 'ere—an' rings you up. Leastways 'e said——"

"Yes, that's right. What then?"

"Him an' me searches the premises from end to end, but didn't find no one. I sees 'owever that number two safe'd been bust open."

"A very clear statement, Fritz. All right thank you," and when the man had

withdrawn: "Now then, Herr Hoffman, your turn."

"I sent at once for a doctor—and when he came we carried Frickner here."

"Was there anything—a cylinder or a gasbag near him? No—well—I'll have a look later."

"I left Fritz to watch his colleague until the doctor came, and examined the safe. I put on gloves, and merely turned over the papers. I fear the precious H.S. 47, formulas, and the Björsen plans, are missing. This Björsen is a new, very light machine-gun, invented by a Dane."

"I see. Let's have a look at the safe now."

In an office littered with drawings and instruments, were three small Chubbs' safes of recent design. Two were normal. The third stood wide open.

"This has not been forced," Wilder said examining the lock. "What was the combination? Eh—H.S. 47? Do you usually set your safes to such obvious——"

"It was not obvious. Only I and Von Schiff, my chief draughtsman knew the formulas were in there."

"Humph—then the alternative is that the thief listened to the fall of the tumblers with a Helmholtz microphone. Now this inner door——"

He stooped over a curiously bent and buckled sheet of super-hard steel, which lay on some rugs and ropes on the floor.

"Um-m—this seems to have been torn out by an explosion. Yes; there was a gutter of beeswax along the joins. That's better than soap, but takes longer. Usually they drill holes and use a soap funnel to run in the 'oil.' Thanks to the wax though, the explosion merely tore away the inner door without injuring the safe itself. A skilful chap."

He stooped and picked a tiny flake of wax from the carpet.

"Ha; this dripped and fell on one of his fingers when he melted the beeswax. It's curved like a fingertip, and the lines and loops are beautifully clear. I can guess what happened. He took off his gloves to work better and when this flake hardened it contracted and fell—unnoticed. Good Lord—see this?"

He picked up a tiny strip of court-plaster with his tweezers. "He wasn't wearing gloves. He'd simply gummed court-plaster across the finger tips—that means we shall find no fingerprints. Just a coincidence that this strip cracked off. The one drawback to court-plaster. There's another bit of wax, but no print on it. Well, you'd better go carefully through the papers again; let me have a list and a minute description of what's missing. This is an inside job you know. Either the thief's one of your employees, or he had an accomplice among 'em. We'll search again, at once; there's just a chance he's still on the premises. Hulloa—I'm coming doctor."

Frickner was conscious at last, and Wilder at once questioned him. He too had gone his rounds as usual. About four o'clock he had patrolled the corridor again—flashing his lamp from side to side until he came to a bend where the passage turned off at right angles. "Suddenly I seen a great black shadow on the wall," he related, his voice shaking with excitement. "It was a man with a big hump on his back. His hands was outstretched as though to grab me; it fair give me the shivers. An' just as I grabbed at me whistle chain I heard a hissin' noise, an' smelled—it was like—acetylene. Before I could blow me whistle the walls starts spinnin' round and round, and the floor hits me a whack—an' that's all I know."

"For you to have seen a shadow there

must have been a light behind the man with the hump. Didn't you turn to see what made the Shadow——?"

Before the guard could reply, the door burst open and the manager appeared, waving a paper excitedly.

"He didn't get the H.S. 47 formula after all!. The most important part had slipped behind——"

As Wilder sprang at the manager, pushing him back into the room and slamming the door, a queer, gurgling cry from the watchman caused me to turn hastily, and it seemed to me that for a moment his eyes had glared ferociously. He was struggling to rise from the couch, but when I jumped and caught at his arm he stared at me with vacant, glassy pupils and suddenly crumpling at the knees, slipped helplessly to the floor.

"There—look—it's comin' again—the Shadder," he babbled incoherently. "Water—I'm burnin'."

I ran to the door just as it opened, and the doctor came hurrying in with some brandy.

"I feared as much," he nodded, when I told him what had occurred. "He's had a bad shock—poor fellow—and his nerves were already shaken. You know he lost his hands rescuing some children from a burning house? I had the whole story from the surgeon who amputated—it happened in Hamburg. It was on his earnest recommendation Frickner was given this post."

"Well—*in a way it's lucky his hands are gone, or he might be suspected,*" a voice drawled over my shoulder and, to my surprise, Lange stepped suddenly from behind the door leading to the adjoining office.

The medico was indignant. "I'll answer for Frickner's honesty. His record is excellent. Inquiries were made when the surgeon recommended him here because he lost his hands saving three kiddies from a blazing house. Besides, a gaseous combination of Ethyl-Chloro-di-oxy-carbon such as the thief used, acts instantly, so he couldn't have got rid of the gasbag or cylinder——"

"An accomplice perhaps——"

"All right—where *is* this accomplice ——?"

"Humph—come to that, where's the thief? A man who knew this place so well that he actually dared to use an explosive. Any sign of him, Lange?"

My friend shook his head.

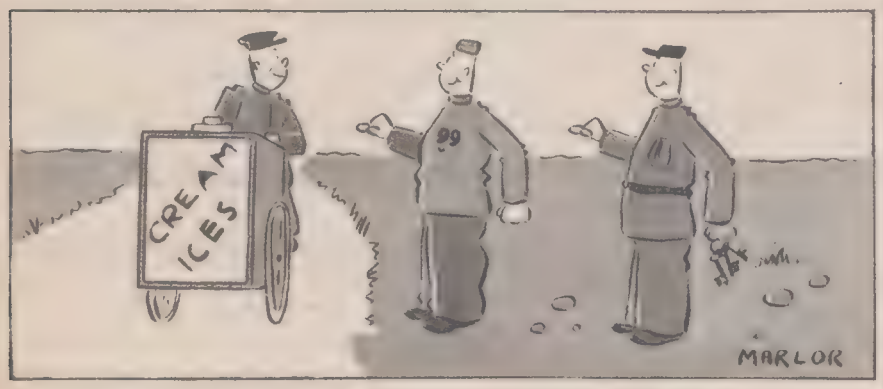
"Well, then, listen. You've been lucky about that formula, Hoffman. But I suggest you get a copy made at once, and put original and copy separately into your strongest safes. You'll also get a fake copy made that looks all right, but is really all wrong; I may need it for baiting a trap. When it's ready——" he broke off to glance meaningly at me, and then at the door. I was across the room and had flung it wide in one bound. The passage was empty, but out of the tail of my eye I caught a vague movement where the passage turned off. Running silently to the bend, I sprang suddenly past it and cannoned into a man approaching, apparently, from the other end.

"Don't—don't choke me," the fellow gasped, turning a dirty grey. "I'm Von Schiff—chief draughtsman. The manager rang for me. What's the matter?"

I hastily apologised.

"Oh I see—no one came this way, though. But there's Frickner's cubicle. Both watchmen have a little room each, in their own section, where they can sleep during the day. Let's take a look at it."

Turning the handle softly I peeped in and saw Frickner tossing feverishly on his bed, apparently unconscious of my scrutiny. The doctor had caused him to be put to bed, I was told. So whilst we



went to the canteen for a meal, Von Schiff, a good-natured, pale-faced little man with huge tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, was set to work on the formula and drawings. The employees were meanwhile being assembled—from office boys to works-managers—in the board room, at the other end of the group of buildings. The manager explained to them all that Von Wilder desired to question each in turn. He calmed their fears and indignation by telling them that he himself had been questioned and even searched. He felt sure, therefore, that none would object to this very necessary phase of the investigation. They were a nice lot of fellows and, being most of them skilled craftsmen, had more than the ordinary working man's tolerance for our unenviable task. Two hours had passed perhaps; each man, as his interrogation ended, seating himself in a corner. Suddenly the door burst open and a young man in the white overalls and apron of the chemists, came lurching towards us as though drunk, his face grey and beaded with sweat. Clutching at the manager's arm, he cried in a thin, shrill voice:

"Von Schiff's dead! He's been murdered!" Flinging up his arms he gazed wildly about him a moment, then slid to the floor in a swoon. Ordering all to remain where they were, Von Wilder beckoned to the manager and ran up the stairs. As we reached corridor number four, we heard a voice calling hoarsely for help

"Let me out—let me out—damn you. There's been an accident—I heard it," and the door of the watchman's room rattled under a rain of blows.

"That's Frickner," the manager stated, unnecessarily. "Hey—isn't your key inside?"

"No, you fool. I'd a' been out otherwise, wouldn't I? Somebody's locked me in and taken the key. Is that you, Mr. Hoffman, sir? I heard a cry just now. I was asleep; it woke me, and I stumbled out. Before I could open the door, the lock snapped twice. Then I heard someone laugh, and go shufflin' away."

"All right—go back to bed. I'll get a locksmith."

"But I want to come out. Something's happened again—I know. I'll go crazy if I stay here."

Wilder looked at Lange. "You stay here and talk to him, Paul."

A horrible sight met our eyes in the little office. Poor Von Schiff sat at his desk his head lolling limply back over one shoulder, his glassy, lifeless eyes staring at the ceiling. On his swollen throat were the livid, oval marks of the strangler's thumbs and knuckles. I saw at once from the twisted, creased lapels that the assassin had gripped them to increase the pressure of his knuckles, a favourite trick of Berlin thugs. The papers and instruments under the dead man's hands showed that he had been copying the unlucky formulas when attacked. This time the thief had got what he wanted: the originals were gone.

Lange joined me whilst I was busy with camera and quick drying cement; Von Wilder had said he would need exact impressions of the marks on the dead man's throat.

"You've noticed Schiff's expression?" he asked me, in a hushed voice. "It's not so much fear as incredulous horror. He recognised his murderer, but couldn't believe his eyes. . . . I think I know why," he added, in a barely audible whisper.

"You saw that scratch?" I asked, pointing to where the polished table was scored across from the blotter to the edge. "Wilder seemed to think it unimportant."

Lange nodded and focused his strongest magnifier. He scrutinised the scratch intently; then, dropping to his knees, examined the carpet. He thereupon went over the dead man's clothes and I saw him loosen what looked like a cotton thread from about one of the buttons.

"Come along if you've finished too," he threw over his shoulder, and I started at the note of repressed excitement.

"We're in this together and I shall want your help. The chief'll be annoyed if we beat him, but I guess he'll forgive us anything when we bring in the 'Shadow.'"

"*Who is it, Paul?*" I demanded, eagerly. "Tell me—I've a horrible intuition. Did you notice that the manager was away for over half an hour when Wilder was questioning the men. Where's he now?"

(*please turn over*)

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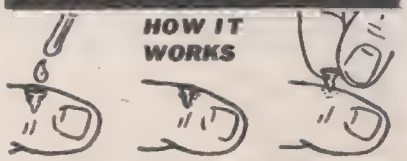

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NOXACORN

"Who—the manager? Sobbing like a child, in his office, poor devil. Von Schiff was his friend. Look here, you can't side-track me. It's fifty-fifty between us. Write your man's name on a bit of paper, sign it, and I'll do likewise. We'll put both slips in an envelope and seal it right now. Come on. We've lots of work yet." Despite the watchman's frantic desire to help he had been ordered to the infirmary room and was in a state of collapse when Lange went to question him. He had made me stand guard outside while he rummaged Frickner's little room, but refused to tell me if he had found anything. Together we had afterwards sought an interview with our chief and obtained permission to remain secretly at the factory, that night.

"We may need a few men sir, later on," Lange added.

"We hope to bring in The Shadow. He has been cleverly sheltering himself in an honourable position. No wonder no one suspected him. We hope to get most of his gang too. That's when we shall need help."

Wilder glared incredulously at his old and tried assistant. Then he shrugged and laughed, somewhat wistfully.

"I'm getting old, I'm afraid. Still, I don't care what you do, Paul, so long as you get this dirty rogue. I promise not to be jealous."

"Nonsense, sir, it was just luck. You happened not to see what I saw."

So when dark came, Lange crouched in the deep shadow of a window that overlooked the courtyard wall—his pistol ready—whilst I had climbed a tree outside, from whence I could see all round with my night glasses. Another exhaustive search of the place had proved vain. Not the slightest clue to the criminal's whereabouts had been found, although the audacious murder of Von Schiff, and the locking of Frickner's door, proved that the murderer had coolly remained on the premises and that the formula must still be there, too.

The hours dragged slowly and uneventfully until I began to regret my wasted night. But as ten o'clock struck, an owl suddenly hooted in the distance and my ear, attuned to the silence, caught the click of a lock.

A small door in the outer wall had opened and a moment later a furtive figure slipped out and flattened itself against the wall. So perfectly did the man merge into the grey stone and so motionless did he remain, that more than once I lost him and only recovered him, thanks to my glasses. The fellow remained thus quite half an hour. Then, assured at last that no one watched, he dodged across the street bent almost double, and halted under the very tree in which I sat.

It was well we had agreed upon a definite series of signals. Once more the hoot of an owl sounded softly, but since there was no answering signal from me, Lange remained at his post. For a time I had heard the fellow shuffling about; then there came a scraping and rustling among the lower branches, and for a moment I feared he actually meant to climb up. But the noise ceased almost at once and, to my relief I saw him walking quickly away. Something in his manner told me that now, for some reason, he was no longer afraid of pursuit. I hurriedly gave Lange the all-clear, and we started after him in an old market cart my friend had brought out as being least likely to arouse suspicion.

It was fortunate we had this vehicle, for some ten minutes later our quarry climbed into a waiting car. Although our horse trotted handsomely we were quite a distance behind when we reached the outskirts of the city. Lange had foreseen that the cart would not do in town at that hour and had arranged for a motor relay to pick us up. The chase led to the Oranienburger Thor, where our man began to edge towards the Moabit slums. Soon we were threading the maze of narrow streets that protected the criminal quarter, and my anxiety grew lest we should lose our man among them. Lange was apparently quite optimistic.

"You needn't worry—I've spread our net. See that ragged newsboy hangin' on behind 'em? That's Heinrich! I've got our best scouts out for this haul. I think our man's making for the *Tanzboden*. It's the kind of retreat he'd choose. Good job we're dressed to follow anywhere. Ah—I was right——" as the car slowed before the infamous dance hall and our man vanished down the stairs.

"Come on—we mustn't lose sight of him."

A spasm of disappointment shook me as the fellow lurched up to the bar and I saw his face. He was a complete stranger to me. Lange was holding my arm and felt me start.

"It's all right," he whispered, craning his neck as our man flung down a coin, and elbowing roughly past the dancers, made for a door on the opposite side of the floor. I caught a glimpse of a small room with a single lamp and several ruffianly men grouped about a table.

"Now's our chance," Lange said tersely; "we'll get 'em all."

Drawing his pistol he kicked the door open with a sharp—"Hands up!"

I have no very clear recollection of what followed. Pistol shots deafened me; the acrid stench of sweat and beer filled the room and a blow from a broken chair sent me crashing into the table, whence I slid to the floor with two of the blackguards on top of me. Fortunately, the room was so small, they blundered into each other; and a lucky shot from Lange's pistol had smashed the lamp. But I was being gradually strangled and fully expected to end there, when the door abruptly splintered and fell and, with a fierce hulloo and resistless rush, a dozen police, who had followed us, by Lange's order, hurled themselves on the dismayed rogues. . . .

QUINTUPLETS are all very well, but wait until you meet THE BROOD OF THE DRAGON NEXT WEEK

When our prisoners had been taken to the waiting cars, Lange ambled across to me, a knife blade pressed on a promising black eye.

"I'm afraid I've made a hash of it, after all. I suppose you didn't see if the man we followed planted a parcel?"

I shook my head. "A parcel—no——" Suddenly I remembered the noise I had heard in the branches.

"By Jove—now I think of it—I'll bet he stuck something into the tree in which I squatted."

Lange stared owlishly. Then, suddenly grasping my meaning, he cried to me to take charge of our captives and, jumping into his car, drove madly away.

He made excellent time and was actually on hand when the men we had caught were being hustled to the cells.

Only the fellow we had followed was taken to Wilder's office, where, with a dramatic flourish Lange announced :

."Here's The Shadow, chief! Just watch and I'll show you."

I saw he had a parcel under his arm. Turning his back so as to cover his prisoner, he called to me to hold the man.

A short sharp struggle followed, and there, transformed by a wig of grey hair, beard and moustache, pulled all awry, stood Frickner. My glance flashed instantly downwards and I saw, now dangling from his wrists, the familiar leather cuffs and steel claws that had transformed him into an apparently helpless cripple. But *below these hollow shams were two powerful hands of flesh and blood!*

Wilder stared—speechless for once. Walking up to the prisoner he grasped his left hand and pressed a piece of soft wax on the index finger. Without a word he compared this with the flake of wax found before the safe.

Lines and ridges were the same!

He nodded to the waiting guards.

"To the cells—but stay with him!" And when we were alone :

"Now, Lange, how did you do it?"

Lange grinned, complacently, and, seating himself related our night's adventures.

"You see, chief," he concluded, "I was suspicious already because of the two cigarettes Fritz said he messed up. Then, when that fool manager came barging in with the cry that the actual formula had been overlooked, I happened to be watching Frickner—unnoticed—and saw the furious light that flamed in his eyes. I saw how it instantly changed to the blank stare of delirium when he caught sight of me, and from that minute I made sure he was in it, at least, and that he'd probably doped himself. So I nosed round and, on a shelf close by where they'd found him, between some old telephone directories, I came on this——"

He handed Wilder a rubberised silk bag, with a small tap that still smelled of garlic.

"In the wall above the shelf was a tiny hole. It went through into a wardrobe—for behind that wall was Frickner's room. There was nothing unusual in the wardrobe, however, beyond a bit of twine in one of his boots. Eh? No, not very illuminating. But the twine had two slip knots — one about the boot. It worried me for hours. And then, suddenly I knew the twine had been looped round the distended gasbag and the boot drawn up to the hole inside the wardrobe when he held the bag close to his face. When he lost consciousness he naturally let go, and the weight of the boot pulled the bag to the shelf and between the books. But as the bag deflated the loop also slipped off and through the hole, falling with, and into, the boot. So that was why nothing was found near him. That beard and moustache you saw on him just now were mine. His own had probably been gummed on, hair by hair; naturally, no one looked for trickery—simply because he was a cripple. No wonder he dared to 'blow out' that safe door; those rugs tied before the door were just for the look of things. He, of course, could choose the moment when the other watchman was at the far end of the factory."

"But where did he hide the stolen papers?"

Lange held out one of the claws, and pointed to a hollow inside the cuff.

"His fingers gripped that crossbar, so they couldn't slip off by chance. A wonderful idea, eh? Who would suspect a cripple without hands. Naturally poor Von Schiff was not alarmed when Frickner came into his room. I expect the fellow just asked a question and, leaning across the table, suddenly gripped his throat. It explains Von Schiff's expression of incredulous horror. As soon as I twigged that gas bag, I scattered some powdered lead oxide inside Frickner's door; and I found traces of the stuff on the carpet by Schiff's table. I also found a rootless grey hair on Schiff's coat. So when I had that talk with Frickner afterwards, in the first-aid room, I looked for a shred of copal varnish on one of the claws. It was there on the point of the right claw. I guessed that's what had made the scratch on the table because those claws would be dangling from his wrists, of course, when he murdered Von Schiff. To make absolutely sure I was right, I got him to show me how his wonderful claws worked, and *the tendons in his forearm moved!*"

Frickner's real name was not made public; he was executed within the year under an alias.

"But how did he get the job of watchman?"

"It was offered to a poor devil named Frickner—the real Frickner. The Lord only knows where he is, poor devil."

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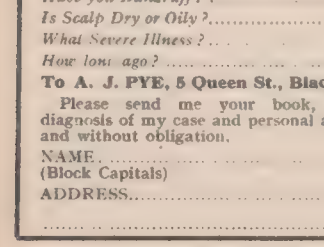

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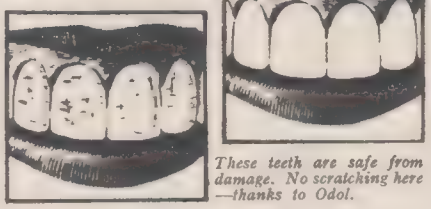

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WHAT PRICE BORROWED PLUMES

Continued from page 23

"Verra guid!" said Malcolm, with his mouth full. "Better nor the cookies. I like them best wi' big currants." He eyed Hector suspiciously. "Ye havenae kept any back?"

"I gave ye the whole jing-bang lot!" Hector declared, with indignation. "That was the bargain. . . . But ye said I might get a wee drink o' the lemonade."

"Ay, if I left any of it," remarked Malcolm, putting the bottle to his mouth and drinking with a loud, gurgling noise. "It's verra nice lemonade," he added, pausing for breath and tipping up the bottle again. "Here, ye can hae it now—that's all I can manage." He gave forth a loud sigh of repletion.

Hector drank. "Ye've took nearly all," he muttered, in disgust. "Nae wonder ye were thirsty after eating all that guid chuck." His own hunger had been sharpened almost unbearably by the sight of Malcolm's voracious attack upon the food. "And now," he continued, "I'll thank ye to unbuckle that sporran and hand it over."

Malcolm was silent for a moment. "I've just been thinking about it," he said, slowly. "Ma uncle will gie me a thrashing . . ."

"But ye said it was worth it!" cried Hector.

"Ay, but I've kind o' changed ma mind. . . ."

"Ye cannae back out now. A bargain's a bargain." Hector shoved out his hand in the darkness. "Come on, gie me that sporran."

But Malcolm began to retreat and Hector followed. "Hand it over, ye dirty sneak. Ay, and I'll thank ye for the catapult I lent ye."

"I havenae got it," mumbled the boy, and Hector gripped him by the arm.

"It's a guid ding on the lug ye'll get. Where's ma catty?"

"I—I lost it," Malcolm confessed. "It must've dropped out o' ma pocket. . . ."

"Ye've lost ma catapult?" wailed Hector.

Hot anger bubbled up within him, and he was on the point of driving his fist into Malcolm's ribs when there was an interruption. A husky voice hailed him from near at hand:

"Hey, laddie—is that you!"

He swung round. A small window had been opened and a white face peered out. When Hector recovered his surprise and drew a little nearer, he recognised the features of Mr. Lawrie Haggart.

"I'm in an awful pickle, laddie!" said Mr. Haggart, in a voice that trembled.

Standing on tiptoe, Hector peered in. A lantern on the corn-bin shed a faint light. "Michty!" he gasped. "Ye're in your shirt-tail. . . . What have ye done wi' your clothes?"

Mr. Haggart gave a low moan. "A terrible thing's happened. . . . I cannae get out except through the barn—and folk would see me." He pulled the blanket more closely round his shoulders. "Ma Sabbath clothes is lost. Could ye no' run down to the village and get ma old ones—they're at Stoddart the tailor's. . . . I'll mebby get ye some more cookies," he added, hopefully.

Hector's brow was wrinkled in perplexity. Why his friend Mr. Haggart should be in there alone with a blanket round him was a mystery he could not fathom, but clearly something had to be done. He listened to the shaking voice that told him how to locate the tailor's shop, and then he heard the boy behind him give a little gasp of consternation.

"What did ye say?" he asked Malcolm.

"I didnae speak . . ." muttered the boy. But Hector had him by the collar and he began to blurt out the truth. "I—I think mebby I ken where Mr. Haggart's clothes are. Leave go and I'll tell ye."

"What were you doing wi' his clothes?" demanded Hector, fiercely.

Malcolm stifled a sob. "Miss Haggart gied me a penny to take a parcel down to the tailor's—and I forgot it. I put it down behind a dyke. Like enough, it'll still be there. . . . I'll take ye to the place if ye'll let go."

Hector went back to the window. "I think I can get ye your clothes, Maister—I'll no' be long. . . ."

He did not wait to hear Mr. Haggart's thanks, but hastened across the yard with Malcolm, keeping well in the shadows. There was a dangerous bit near the lighted entrance of the barn where several couples were having a breath of fresh air around the door, but the two boys got past without being seen, and five minutes later they were making their way carefully along by the side of a dry-stone wall.

Hector, who was slightly ahead, gave a little whoop of joy.

"Ay, that's the parcel," agreed Malcolm. "I—I put it down there to hae some pot-shots wi' the catapult. I must have forgot all about it."

"Ye gowk!" Hector gave him a wrathful shove. "Get awa' back to your bed afore I set on ye!"

And with the parcel under his arm, he raced back towards the farmyard. The fact that he had a score to settle with Malcolm was forgotten in his eagerness to help his friend, Mr. Haggart, and he made a swift dart across the lighted space at the open door of the barn. Hector was cutting round the corner when he gave a gulp of dismay. He had blundered

into a tall, stern-faced man; and when he tried to jink to one side, a hand shot out and gripped him by the shoulder.

"What's this!" The man had a deep growling voice. "Hey, you're the laddie I've been looking for!" From his pocket he pulled a catapult. "Does this belong to you?"

"Ay, thank ye. It's mine." Hector held out his hand to take it, but received a resounding buffet on the side of his head.

"So ye admit it, ye young blackgaird!" The farmer raised his hand to administer another cuff. "I blamed ma nephew Malcolm for the damage that's been done, but he said it was you."

"What—what damage?" Hector stared up at him.

"Damage!" cried the farmer explosively. "Twa smashed windows, a hole in ma greenhouse—ay, and a barometer broken in the front porch. . . ." A wrathful hand swung over for the third time, then the farmer suddenly pointed to the parcel.

"What have ye got there, eh? Ye're a young thief into the bargain, I'm thinking. Where did ye find that?"

"It's—it's—a man's clothes. . . ."

"Whose?" demanded the farmer. But Hector remained silent. For all he knew, he might be getting Mr. Haggart into still deeper trouble if he admitted that his friend now stood garbed in a blanket in a room off the barn.

"Gie this to me!" The farmer jerked the parcel from Hector's hands and hurled him through the doorway. An eightsome reel had just come to an end, and the dancers were beginning to leave the floor when the farmer's deep voice broke in:

"Here's a parcel belonging to somebody. Do any of ye claim it?" He paused. "I caught this laddie going off wi' it. He says it's a suit o' clothes."

But nobody spoke and the farmer scratched his head. "It must belong to somebody!" he expostulated. "Ye'd better admit it, laddie. Where did ye get this parcel——"

And then from the background, an unsteady voice was raised: "Please, Maister, I think it's mine!"

The farmer turned and peered into the shadows. A door stood open a few inches and the white face of Mr. Lawrie Haggart could be seen. An arm, in a shirt sleeve, was stretched out appealingly, but the rest of his body was being kept carefully out of sight.

The farmer glared down at Hector. "Get out o' here," he said sternly, then stalked across the floor towards Mr. Haggart.

Hector made a bee-line into the open air. He had seen Auld Neil peering at him from the corner beside the piano and he had a shrewd idea that later on there would be an unpleasant interview. But meanwhile he had a more important matter to think about. He found Malcolm lurking in the darkness near the farmhouse, and went up to him with his fists clenched.

"Up wi' your jukes!" he burst out. "Ye've been smashing windows wi' ma catapult and ye told your uncle it was me. Here's something that'll learn ye."

His fists went thumping into Malcolm's ribs, and presently their arms were whirling in a fierce battle. Malcolm was taller and heavier, but Hector was tough and wiry, and presently he heard the other boy's whimper of defeat.

"Ye've had enough?" He rose, wiping his hands on his jacket. "Get up, ye blubberin' bairn! Awa' to your bed and this'll be a lesson to ye."

Slowly Malcolm pulled himself to his feet. "I cannae climb up to ma bedroom window. . . ." He tried to check his sobs. "I got down by the roof of a shed. Will ye no' help me up? If ma uncle kens I've been out. . . ."

"Ou, I'll help ye," grunted Hector, "and stop that blubberin', or I'll gie ye more to blub about."

No further words were spoken as he hoisted Malcolm up on the shed and waited until the boy had clambered through his bedroom window; then a final wail floated down from above. Malcolm was trying to say something, but already Hector had turned on his heel and was striding away into the darkness.

An hour later, when Miss Maggie Haggart returned home, she found her brother sitting by the kitchen fire. He was hunched up in an armchair, and he avoided her questing eye.

"Ye're back early frae the dance, Lawrie," she remarked.

"I—I didnae enjoy it verra much." He hesitated. "You were right about yon Katie Proudfoot—she's a cold-hearted besom."

"I'm glad you've learned your lesson," nodded his sister.

"Ay, I'm finished wi' gadding about, Maggie," said Lawrie earnestly. "I see it all now. I'm never happier than here at home—wi' you."

"I'm verra glad to hear it," she said, softly. "Mebby there's no need to get your Sabbath suit altered after all. . . ."

At an early hour next morning, Auld Neil and Hector were trudging on the road to Edinburgh, with the dog close behind them.

"When we get home," said the old man after a long silence, "I hope ye'll try to behave yoursel'. If I'd done ma duty last night, I'd have thrashed ye twice as hard as I did."

Hector pulled a wry face.

"That was a terrible bother ye got into, laddie," continued the fiddler in reproof. "And what good did it do ye? What good, eh? Nothing!"

"I'm no' so sure about that," remarked Hector. "I had a fight wi' another laddie. I gied him what he deserved and he lost. . . ."

"Lost what?" Noticing a smile of triumph on the boy's face, Auld Neil stared down at the faded kilt."

In front of it—like a jewel in a tarnished setting—there hung a new and resplendent leather sporran.

NEXT WEEK

WE can still remember vividly our first Harold Titus story, describing, as it did, the struggles in the acrid cavern of a great motor-car building shed to produce a new wing, cast as a whole.

There was trouble in the beginning because, as an American, Mr. Titus called a wing a fender; or should we say that because we weren't too familiar with American terms for things that worry us only when we plough the neighbour's gateposts with them, we were a little troubled as to whether the fender referred to in the story was really a wing.

Still it was a grand story and vast numbers of men interested in motor-car manufacturing wrote asking questions. When we sent some of their letters to Mr. Titus, at his home in Traverse City, Michigan, he wrote back to say that although he had become so word-perfect in describing the "innards" of machinery, he was not a bit mechanically inclined.

"Every story," he added, "entails at least one 300-mile trip to an automobile factory and up to a week spent in it, making myself so familiar with the technical details that I fool engineers into believing I am an engineer myself.

"The front fender story was written after I had spent exactly three days in the Olds Motor Works.

"I encountered a plant executive, who was so enthusiastic over his job that about all I had to do was outline a plot and make notes on what he told me would happen in such hypothetical circumstances.

"After the story had been published, I received a letter from the president of a flourishing firm of motor-car body producers in which he said, 'you must have spent many years in die shops.'"

Next week we publish another Harold Titus story, this time about a young man in the fruit-canning industry. It is a whimsical story, full of merriment and surprise. For, you see, Henry Bogle decided that the best thing to do when you're fired is to go fishing.

YOU'RE TELLING US!

YOU'RE TELLING US! Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed on this page. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss

YOU wouldn't know, of course, how troubled we have been lately trying to figure out what makes a war correspondent in China decide, on meeting a fellow with a gun, whether he is to congratulate a defender of the realm or greet just another member of the honourable missionary corps, now intent on making China a land fit for old-fashioned geisha girls.

In fact, we lost so much sleep over it during the last few afternoons, we were thinking we would have to shelve it with such unsolved problems as the ultimate fate of old shoes, blunted razor blades, child actors, crooners and men who wear tyrolean hats, when there came a great enlightenment.

"It's like this," said the gentleman in the news theatre to his blonde companion in such a loud voice we could not help hearing, "when you meet a general who claims to have advanced a mile you know he's Chinese; if he tells you he has advanced ten miles then you know he's Japanese."

See how easy it is to work these things out when there are two heads on your shoulders!

Meanwhile, we can't help feeling sorry for John D. Lathom, of Richmond, Surrey, who is so obviously feeling the pinch of destiny it is a wonder he hasn't ground his teeth into powder and blown them out through his nose long before now.

"A fellow has to be a contortionist to get by these days," he wails, as though he has more troubles than a microbe has relatives. "First of all you have to keep your back to the wall and your ear to the ground. Then you've got to put your shoulder to the wheel, your nose to the grindstone, keep a level head and your feet on the ground. And at the same time look for a silver lining with your head in the clouds."

We hope only that Mr. Lathom feels better for having got that off his chest, for there is nothing we can do about it except remind him of the old back-

woodsman who was asked whether he had ever been lost in the woods.

"No, I never got lost," he said, "but I was once bewildered for three days."

Maybe, even Mr. Lathom is only just a little bemused by the grinding cogs of the universe. Maybe some day he'll see a bird make a false landing and end up on its tail, or capture again the sensational delight of feeling happy all over, merely because he has heard the music of many waters, and then he'll laugh about the whole thing.

He might even get a little relief by considering the man in the Kentucky mountains who did not know until the other day that there had been a war to make the world safe for democracy, to end war and to get rid of quite a lot of old battleships.

Ever since we heard about him we've been wondering what he was told when he asked who won the war. But we are afraid to go into details for fear somebody writes to say he won the war. We've only got to mention some historical fact these days when out pops somebody to say "that's me" or "I was there."

We mentioned the St. James's Palace murder a few weeks back when W. J. Passingham, in his series of articles about the men of mystery who

were never found out, tried to discover the reason for the murder of Sellis, valet to the Duke of Cumberland, in 1810.

Another valet and the Duke were involved in a crime that was never explained, but the other day we got a letter from Miss Phyllis Sewell, of Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, saying, "I should like to say that Sellis was my great, great grandfather. The story is not quite the same as the one in a book we have at home, but stories do alter a little with time.

"It seems strange that after so many years an incident such as this should be brought to light again. My family thought it had been long forgotten."

Then another reader wrote to say he had seen the last public execution, claiming to be the oldest living man to have done so. But he had not reckoned with eighty-five-year-old Tom Glenville, of Forest Gate, London, E.7, who says he not only saw the public execution of Barret, Irish rebel, but also saw the public hanging of the five pirates of the *Flowery Land* from the window of a tavern in Newgate to which he had been taken by his father.

"He was a patron of the prize ring, theatres and music hall," says Mr. Glenville, "and he thought I should start early to see all sides of life. I therefore saw the fight between Sayers and Heenan from a seat between my father and a friend in a dog cart.

And when you consider that Mr. Glenville must have been seven when he saw the aforesaid prize fight, you can understand why we think we must be just a little absent-minded when we can't remember who won the last world war.

Difficult CHINS

No 7 The "Go-Getter"

To see this species of well-bristled chin at its best, it is necessary to observe its behaviour when its owner is purchasing a Vinolia Shaving Stick. Should an unwary shop assistant suggest that some other kind of shaving soap might be tried, the chin is immediately projected forward to such an extent as to endanger the bottles on the back shelf. Such behaviour is not incomprehensible to anyone who knows what magnificent shaves you get with Vinolia. 125 shaves for 9d., and a bakelite drainer-case, too.

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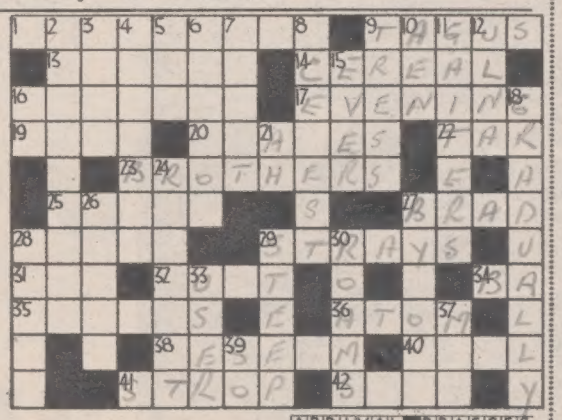
For Your Amusement

CLUES ACROSS

1. Cage trail (anagram).
9. A gust in a river.
13. Mean and possibly vile.
14. Belonging to spring.
16. Pacify or allay.
17. Into this day declines.
19. Appear.
20. Some plants have beginnings thus.
22. Viscous substance.
23. So were Cain and Abel.
25. Males upset.
27. Nail.
28. In split seconds perhaps.
29. Deviates from path or perhaps from rectitude.
31. Plunder.
32. Eject.
34. Lamb's cry.
35. May be prejudice.
36. Minute particle.
38. To be seemly hides and explains this.
40. Bread perhaps, or cylinder.
41. Leather for sharpening.
42. A piece of turf is so alkaline.

CLUES DOWN

2. Calumny and maybe slander.
3. Occasionally undesirable means of suspension.
4. Shake.
5. Aid will be useful here.
6. Supple.
7. Skilful.
8. Highest on earth.
9. Rests in a lock.
10. It's a girl.
11. Leg-dress.
12. A bone to pick from luna-
15. Embraces all time.
16. Opens 2.
18. By degrees.
21. This is exclamatory.
24. There is reference to some uncertainty in this military construction.
26. Bounds or range.
27. Commonplace.
28. Just rubbish.
29. Highly inclined.
30. Wanders.
33. Employer.
37. There's a bird in the moat.
39. Thus.



ARRIVAL BRASSES
LOAM B ALERT T
OATMEAL UNION O
FREE NEAREST MR
T PRIDED WESLEY
PASTORAL N
K YE N MEDITATE
NEEDS MAN TRIAL
OAR IDENTICALLY
BC AT ATE HIS
SHAME L NO NAME

Solution to last week's puzzle.

P.S. GOLDEN CIRCLE 4-6-38

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(3 persons)	**£9**	**0**	**0**

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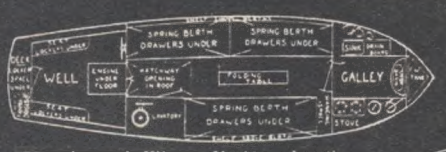

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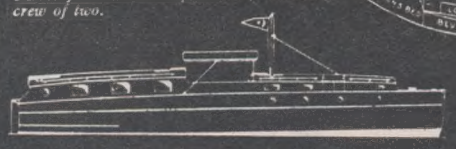

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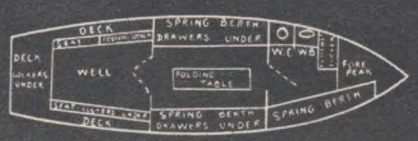

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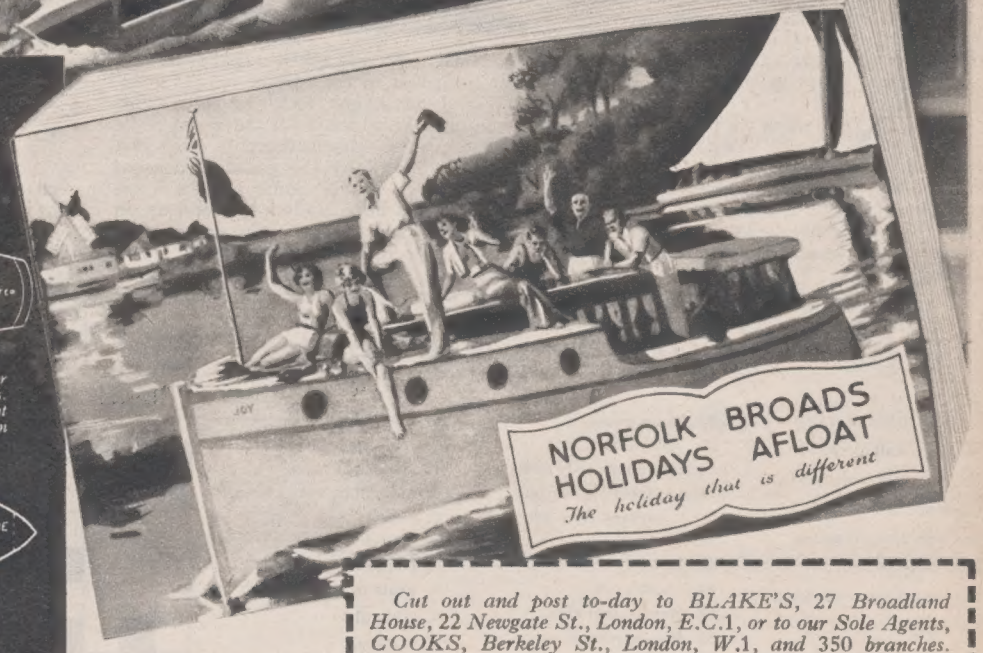

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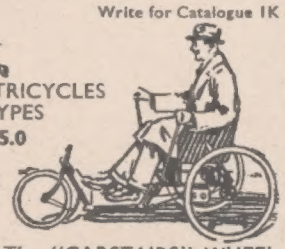

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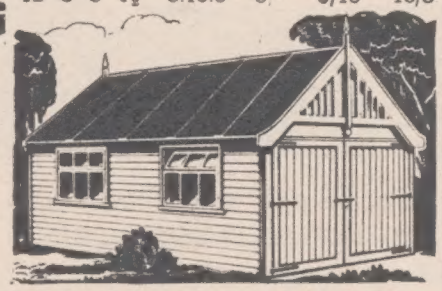

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